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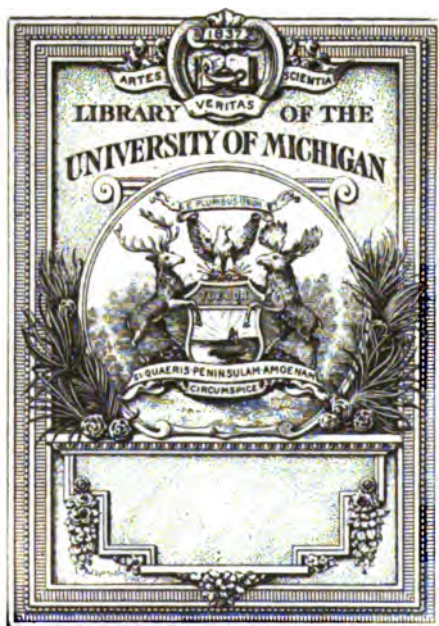
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BELGRAVIA

A London Magazine.

VOL. LXXXII.

SEPTEMBER to DECEMBER, 1893.



London:
F. V. WHITE & CO.,
14, BEDFORD STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1893.

PRINTED BY
KELLY AND CO. LIMITED, 182, 183 AND 184, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.
AND MIDDLE MILL, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.

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BELGRAVIA.

SEPTEMBER, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By MRS. ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

"ON THE TRACK."

CARR was greatly upset by the evident emotion of Madame Falk. It seemed cruel and ill-bred to press any enquiries upon her—yet he was burning for further information.

"Pray forgive me, for disturbing you," he said. "I fear it must seem intrusive on my part questioning you about your pictures, but I was so startled, so struck by the likeness I recognised, that the words had passed my lips before I could stop them. If it distresses you I shall say no more, perhaps some other day you will allow me——"

"Ah, no!" she interrupted. "Let the dead past bury its dead. I do not wish to think that picture can by any possibility resemble your father—strange that at this distance of time the old pain should thrill me. No—my dear young friend—let us not speak on this matter again—it would do you no good—on the contrary it might open your eyes to possible wrong and sorrow if the portrait proved to be that of your father. No, Mr. Carr, do not speak of it again."

"I will of course obey you!" he said slowly—his eyes fixed

on the photograph. "I will leave you now. But do not punish my thoughtless out-spokenness by forbidding me to come again."

"No—I should be sorry to lose the pleasure of seeing you!" said Madame Falk kindly and cordially, "though I will let you go now, and you may be sure I shall write to May and settle about her coming here. You have made me just a little uncomfortable about Ogilvie, unnecessarily so I am sure." She spoke more in her usual tone, but evidently by an effort. Carr therefore shook hands cordially with her and went away—descending the stairs slowly and thoughtfully.

"It is all very curious," he thought, for he too had been deeply moved by the sight of his father's well-remembered features. He had been passionately attached to the only parent he had ever known—and had had a strange lonely boyhood, the only companion of a gloomy irritable man, who was rough and stern to everyone save his son. His early recollections presented him with a picture of wild open-air life, among horses and cattle, hills and pasture. His home was a rude log-hut on a farm or ranche—at some distance from a cluster of buildings of the same description only larger and better. This farm was not his father's. The "Boss" was an older man, rough and masterful too, but his roughness was more rugged than coarse. His father was a man of some importance nevertheless, and often went away with the Boss on expeditions, and held long discussions with him.

The Boss had a wife who seemed to Carr very old, in those childish days, but there were no children to play with him. The Lady Boss was wonderfully good to him and made cakes and pies for his delectation, and was always wanting him to stay with her—yet he was an ungrateful toad and did not care to be with his benefactress. His greatest pleasure was to have lessons with his father, who in the winter evenings taught him regularly. Then came bad times, disease got among the cattle, and fever seized the men.

Among them, Carr's father. He was terribly ill and delirious and then—the child had no father!

The Boss and his wife were very good to him. He became their son. By and by they broke up their establishment—things were all going wrong. Then various pictures came out of memory's store-house, more or less blurred and faded by the

fanning of Time's sombre pinions. A big city—a glorious panorama of mountain and sea. Long days on board ship—delightful sailors who let him skin his hands playing with rough tarry ropes—the grandeur of wide ocean raging under the scourge of the storm-fiend—such were the pictures which swept over Carr's mental field of vision, as he wandered through the streets of Paris, that beautiful city, perhaps the most graceful product of civilisation in Europe. He had not thought of his early rough life for many a day, and now, that photograph had brought it all before his eyes so freshly.

He must—he would—find out all about it, yet he did not want to annoy Madame Falk or cause her pain.

The expression of her face as she begged him not to open old wounds came back to him. It expressed infinite sorrow.

He had a great regard for Madame Falk. There was a tone of wholesome strength—of sound common sense—in her air and conversation that made her a most agreeable companion to Carr. He had profound faith in the loyalty of her nature and would have (he knew not why) have trusted his life to her simple promise. No, he would not pain or annoy her, but he would find out something about that picture—he must, he could not rest till he had. But how? Looking round for ways and means to carry out this determination he thought of Miss Barton.

Of this lady he had not quite so high an opinion as of her cousin and partner—she amused him however, and he shrewdly surmised that profit of any kind was not without its importance in her eyes. It would however be shabby to pump her behind Madame Falk's back, yet the matter was very important to him—suppose he turned out some relation to them? suppose—(his brown cheek flushed) suppose his father had deserted Madame Falk, and married his (Carr's) mother under some other name? True his present appellation was that of the friendly Boss who had adopted him, he scarcely knew what his own had been, he rather believed it had been the same as his own Christian name. It was all very puzzling. Would it not be better to leave it alone, rather than unravel the mystery only to find the bar sinister on his scutcheon? He would wait and see.

At this point in his reflections his progress was arrested by M. Dupont, who greeted him cordially, and informed him that Madame Zavadoskor had arrived in Paris for the winter, and

poured forth many enquiries for their mutual friends. He himself had been in America—had enjoyed his visit—but—Heavens! how good it was to be once more in the city of cities.

Having taken a turn with him on the Boulevards, Carr called a fiacre—and went away to leave his card on Madame Zavadoskoï.

On her side Madame Falk had been greatly shaken by Carr's abrupt questions—not that she believed there was more than an accidental resemblance between her lost husband's picture and the young man's father.

She was generally successful in keeping bitter memories at bay. To *her*, defeat and unhappiness meant destruction—she could not fret and live! Hope was strong within her. Hope had kept her up at first under her cruel trials, and then just indignation had flamed out to keep the springs of her vitality warm and in motion. Time brought many new lights by which to view her husband's conduct; her final conviction being that, for the moment, fierce jealousy had destroyed the balance of his reason, and, before he could recover it, "he had gone down into the grave where all things are forgotten"; and her sweet boy, ah! it was too cruel to rob her of him! that was the strongest proof of temporary insanity. She thanked God for this belief, which brought her that blessed balm—the power to forgive! Was it—could it be possible, that her half-insane husband, escaping the perils of the deep, to which his baby-boy had probably succumbed, had found another companion—the mother of Carr?—that he was right in his recognition? The idea did not rouse in her any indignation. It was so long ago—quite five-and-twenty years—that it all seemed to have happened in another life. *If* he had lived—it was not improbable that he had formed some such connection. But these were dreams—mere dreams.

By the time Miss Barton had returned to dinner Madame Falk was quite herself, though the sharp eyes of her loving, but domineering, friend detected something not exactly normal in her looks.

"What's the matter, Esther? You are as white as paper, and your eyes are quite dark underneath. Have you had a touch of neuralgia, hey?" she asked as she sent away her soup-plate.

"No, nothing whatever. I have been fairly free from that fiend, neuralgia, this winter. Will you take some *Lapin en*

gibelotte or *rognons*?" And the comfortable little dinner went on, interspersed with scraps of talk and bits of gossip.

After a pause of some duration—as Adrienne carried away the last dish, and as Madame Falk handed the roast chestnuts to her cousin, she said :

"Mr. Carr paid me a long visit to-day. He told me all about May, who seems very well placed—by the way, how old would you take Carr to be?"

"Well—let me see. He is old-looking for twenty-five, or young-looking for twenty-seven; I am sure he is not twenty-eight."

"I should not think him so much; but you are a better judge than I am, Sarah."

"I don't know. There is something boyish about him. Then, anyone may be boyish when they are free from care, as he is, lucky fellow! And what report did he give of May?"

"A very good one. She is living with one of those rich, eccentric old maids, who seem to abound in England, and who is very fond of her, still it must be a dull life. He met Mr. Ogilvie, who is some relative to this Miss Macallan. I don't think he likes Ogilvie."

"No? Why doesn't he like him, Esther?"

"I cannot tell; but he is disposed to think that Ogilvie exercises too much authority or influence, or both, over May."

"Oh, pooh, nonsense!"—a pause—then abruptly: "I say, Esther, do you think Mr. Carr has any fancy for our young friend?"

"No; certainly not. I wish, Sarah, you would not allow yourself to think in such a common-place groove. I hate that tendency to fancy all young men and women must fall in love with each other."

"Well, they very often do."

"At all events, I do not think Mr. Carr is inclined that way. He is kind and friendly, that is all."

"All I can say, Esther, I wish it were a little more. Just think what a match it would be for May!"

"I am going to ask her here for the Easter Holidays, and mind, Sarah, you never let a syllable drop that could suggest such an idea to May. Carr will look for some distinguished beauty, you know almost anyone would accept him."

"My dear Esther, I am not quite an idiot."

"I don't suppose you are. But wise people sometimes do foolish things. By-the-way, Mr. Carr wishes to give us a dinner at some café, it will be very pleasant."

To this Miss Barton assented, and then the partners turned to their usual evening occupations, occasionally exchanging a few words, which proved how much they regretted the absence of May, whose company was peculiarly valuable in the long winter evenings.

Madame Falk confessed to herself that she was rather curious to know if Carr would return, and endeavour to reassume his former footing, or would show something of wounded pride at the abrupt rejection of his ideas touching the likeness to his father in the late Falk.

A few days, however, settled the question.

Mr. Carr called, but no one was at home. The evening post brought a very polite note, asking Madame Falk to name a day on which she and Miss Barton would do him the favour of dining with him. This invitation was at once accepted, and Carr himself came to conduct them to his hotel, where he finally decided to give the entertainment; a couple of well-known artists, the correspondent of a leading English paper, and an African explorer, were the male guests. A favourite American poetess was the third lady. It was a pleasant gathering. Many were the theories started and discussed. Orthodoxy would have wrapped its face in its dinner-napkin had it been present—but it had no representative—and the conversation boxed the compass of subjects more or less forbidden.

It was a symposium such as Madame Falk thoroughly enjoyed, and she was one of the most brilliant talkers.

Carr found an opportunity of speaking aside with Miss Barton, while the whole party were arguing eagerly respecting the impressionist school, then in its infancy.

"I should like so much to have a little private talk with you, Miss Barton," he said. "I want you to be so good as to solve a riddle for me."

"A riddle? I don't fancy I can be of much use to you in solving a riddle."

"But you will not refuse to try? Moreover, it must be a profound secret, even from Madame Falk."

"I can be secret enough," returned Miss Barton, whose curiosity began to wake up.

"Then, where can I see you alone?"

"Ah, you are a wicked young man to tempt a woman of my years and discretion to grant you a rendezvous. Let me see—Monday—Madame Falk is generally out all day. Call on Monday about two. I am beginning to be consumed with unholy eagerness to know what the secret is about. I suppose there is a woman in it?"

"Yes, it is chiefly about a woman."

"Hum—young and charming?"

"Very charming."

"Who can it be. I know no very charming woman except Madame Zavadosko?"

"No, it is not the fascinating Russian. You shall know everything on Monday."

"So for four days I am to suffer the pangs of unsatisfied curiosity?"

"Yes, I fear you must. And not a word to Madame Falk."

Here Carr was summoned by the poetess, who thought he had spent time enough on that ugly old woman.

The intervening days, which Miss Barton affected to dread as too severe a trial of patience, went by in the usual way, Madame Falk being even more than ever engrossed in her work, but her observant kinswoman noticed that she was silent and even depressed; but that was a mere passing mood, Miss Barton decided, and so allowed her mind to dwell on the triumph which awaited her prophetic discrimination, for she had quite convinced herself that the secret to be imparted to her by the gay, genial Australian related to his new fancy for May. Somehow or other Esther must have thrown cold water on his dawning passion.

"Like a fool as she is in certain directions, with all her cleverness," mused Sarah. "Instead of encouraging him with all her might. Why it would be a good thing for us all if he married May! What does he make a hubble about I cannot imagine! Rich and free, and pleasant-looking if not regularly handsome, of course May would jump at him, though she is rather cold; I doubt if she would ever care much about anyone. There is no reason in the world why he should hold back, if he isn't already married to some squaw out in Australia—no, they are not

squaws there—some bushranger's daughter, or—well, men *are* idiots—they are either shy or audacious, but always in the wrong direction. It will be a great marriage for May (that is if Carr is not already married). It is certainly about her, and Esther will have to confess that I can see an inch or two further through a mill-stone than she can—well we'll see."

The eagerly-anticipated Monday arrived at last. Madame Falk hurried away after luncheon with a long list of things to be seen, and places to call at, and Miss Barton changed her morning gown for her best garment of black silk and jet, with a fine cravatte of white Brussels lace, in honour of the expected visit from her "young man."

Carr presented himself punctually at two o'clock.

"It is very good of you to receive me!" he said as they shook hands.

"My dear sir! I have been counting the minutes till you came!"

"I confess I have come with the meanest intentions—to pump you on more than one point. Have you any idea what about?"

"Well, perhaps I have. You see I am neither a bat nor a mole."

"Ah! Then Madame Falk has told you how disturbed she was by my recognition of the photograph?"

"Recognition of the photograph?—no—not a word—what *do* you mean?"

"It is understood that all we say is under the seal of secrecy. Though I am the person chiefly concerned, I would not vex Madame Falk for the world, nor do her any harm for two or three."

"All right, Mr. Carr, I'll be as secret as the grave. Get on, do."

"When I was here last week Madame Falk let me come into her workshop—or study—and there my eye was caught by a photograph that startled me by its resemblance to my poor father, who has been dead more than twenty years. I noticed it to Madame Falk, and to my regret and confusion she was greatly upset, so I did not pursue the subject. I hope it is not wrong or mean of me to come and pump you, but I cannot rest till I know a little more about the husband whose portrait Madame Falk said it was."

"No, why should it be wrong? I know my cousin cannot bear to speak of the past, but there is nothing in it for her to be ashamed of, and it doesn't hurt *me* to talk of it?"

"Thank you, Miss Barton, and pray remember I have heard some outline of her story already from Madame Zavadoskoï. This has suggested some strange ideas, I may say hopes. Now let me see that picture again."

"Certainly."

Miss Barton rose, and opened the door into her cousin's den. Carr followed, and gazed long and steadily at the photograph.

"And this one?" he asked, pointing to that of the child.

"That is the little boy who was lost with him."

"Ah! well a likeness at that age does not count," observed Carr. "The longer I look at that picture the more convinced I am that it represents my father, only younger than I remember him. There is the same turn of the head, and curve of the jaw! I wish his left ear were not hidden."

"Why?"

"Oh, because it had a curious natural defect at the top, in the hem of the ear there was a little triangular nip, as if it had been bitten by some animal. Do you remember anything of that kind about this man whom you call Falk?"

Miss Barton shook her head.

"No, I do not, but I saw very little of him. He was a crazy savage, and nearly cost my poor dear cousin her life. No one *could* understand the agony she went through who had not seen it. God forgive him!"

"Hush!" said Carr, a look of pain contracting his open countenance. "Will you tell me," he resumed, after a moment's pause, "how long is it since—since Madame Falk was—that is lost—her husband and boy?"

"About twenty-six years."

"How old was the boy?"

"Just five, I think."

"Then if he were alive he would be thirty-one?"

"Of course!"

"Pray, Miss Barton, tell me the story—your version of it; what I heard is very sketchy."

Miss Barton complied, wondering what it was to lead to.

"Then you never had a trace of them after the shipwreck?"

he asked, when she paused in the narrative, to which he had listened with wrapt attention.

"Never. Some of the passengers who escaped described Falk getting into a boat with the child in his arms, but that boat was lost, at least none of those who were in it ever appeared again."

"Twenty-six years ago," repeated Carr, as if to himself.

"Yes, a little more than twenty-six years. But if you were Falk's son, how is it you are called Carr?"

"Because I took the name of the man who adopted me. My father's name, and my own first name now, is Bernard!"

"Bernard!" repeated Miss Barton in a high key of extreme astonishment. "Why that was Falk's name! Bernard Falk! This is startling."

"My father," continued Carr, "was a German, that was one tie with the Carrs; Mrs. Carr was German, and never spoke English without difficulty; she used to have long talks with my father in their own tongue, and tended him in his last illness—my oldest, far-away, dream-like memory is being hugged up to my father's breast, the cold howling wind, and great dark green waves raging round—of being wet through. Then I can remember nothing till we were among woods and hills, and my good friends the Carrs were mixed up with my life."

And he proceeded to give a sketch of his existence, which has been already presented.

"After I went with my friends to Australia, Mrs. Carr died, some years before her husband," concluded the young man. "He was a rugged and uncultivated Scotsman, not ignorant; a fine character, who fought hard with circumstances, and was on the eve of conquering them when death took him. He left me all he had, and I worked on, on his lines, when gold was discovered on my property, and my fortune was made—no thanks to me! According to my father's reckoning, when he was alive, I was thirty last May; put all this together, Miss Barton, and say—Have I not a right to believe, to hope, that Madame Falk is my mother? If so, by God's help, I will be a good son, and in some degree atone for my poor unhappy father's cruel mistake, the terrible wrong he inflicted on her."

"It's as plain as the nose on your face!" cried Miss Barton

enthusiastically. "My dear young kinsman, *I* accept you with all my heart!" and she held out both hands to him.

"Thank you!" returned Carr, grasping them cordially, while his soft brown eyes lit up with pleasure. "But—I am afraid Madame Falk will want a lot of proof, and even if she is convinced, how will she like the son of my father?"

"How will she like her own son, you mean? Why she'll make a fool of herself about you, as most mothers do, I am pretty sure! Leave it all to me! It is the most wonderful—the most romantic story I ever heard in my life!"

"And when will you speak to her?"

"Oh—on the first opportunity—and have you anything in your father's writing that might convince her?"

"The only thing belonging to him I possess is a small volume of poetry with a line or two of writing on the title page, and some pencil sketches—but I haven't them with me."

"Then send for them, like a dear!" cried Miss Barton, effusively—she was in such a state of excitement she scarcely knew what she was saying. Not only did she think Carr a delightful young man—but she felt as if that vein of gold of which he had spoken had been suddenly deflected across land and sea to touch the very small pile her cousin and herself had contrived to accumulate, with its multiplying power.

"Yes! send for them! You see Madame Falk, I mean your mother—for *I* am quite convinced she is—has peculiar notions, and is greatly troubled with a tiresome conscience, so we must leave nothing undone to convince her——"

"Certainly not!" returned Carr—adding in a graver tone, "and though I might perhaps have been steadier than I've been, I don't think she need be ashamed of me."

"I am sure not!—and she—ah—my dear young friend—you may well be proud of *her*—she *is* a good woman—I am a greedy selfish old heathen compared to her. If you were in rags and tatters—once she believed you were hers—she'd take you to her warm heart!—while I—I don't deny it, may be influenced by that gold you mentioned! Despise me or not—there's the truth for you!"

"It's a sort of truth very few would have the courage to speak," said Carr laughing. "I certainly do not despise you for it!"

"Now, my dear boy, you just go away, I want to have time to compose myself and arrange my plan of proceeding—before she comes in. I will write to you to-morrow, whatever happens."

"Pray do—I shall be awfully anxious! I think there can be no doubt—and the book may be valuable evidence, so good-bye, and many many thanks for your friendly sympathy!" With a hearty hand-shake they parted company—and Miss Barton plumped down on the sofa.

"Yes—I am sympathetic—and truly so, but I am a mercenary old sinner into the bargain! My poor Esther! who has worked so hard and battled so gallantly!—to think that she will have a fine son—a *rich* son to stand by her when age and incapacity come. I do hope and pray that she will not let any crotchets get the better of her. She shan't—she mustn't!"

When Madame Falk came in, very tired and rather damp—for the evening turned out wet, and she had forgotten her umbrella—she found everything tidied up, and in a high state of readiness.

"Why, Sarah," she exclaimed, at they sat down to dinner, "what has happened? You have quite a colour—I hope you haven't a touch of toothache?"

"Oh, dear no! I stood a while in the kitchen making a mayonnaise and the fire caught my face."

Madame Falk went on to describe some pictures she had seen in the artists' studios she had visited—Miss Barton was a little distraught—finally the conversation dragged somewhat.

"Esther!" said her cousin after a short pause, "I want to ask you a question—and I am half afraid."

"Nonsense, Sarah! what is it?"

"It's—it's about him," nodding her curly grey head in the direction of the Den.

Madame Falk understood. "Speak then," she said, with a quick sigh.

"Tell me, Esther—had he—had he anything—any mark on his left ear?"

"What can have put that into your head, Sarah?" exclaimed Madame Falk, greatly surprised. "Yes, he had a curious mark—as if a tiny bit had been pinched out at the edge."

"Then!" cried Miss Barton, standing up in her excitement, "as sure as you sit there young Carr is your son."

CHAPTER XX.

"FOUND."

THE card which Carr left at the Hotel Zavadoskor had brought forth a response in the shape of a printed announcement that the countess would be "at home" on Thursday evenings in February and March, and in the same envelope was a tiny note inviting him to a *tête-à-tête* tea on the following Monday.

He was, however, so occupied with his effort to discover the relationship between his father, himself, and Madame Falk, that he let the appointment pass by unnoticed—and spent the afternoon, or what was left of it after his long interview with Miss Barton, in a rapid ride through the Bois to Suresnes and Sèvres, to calm his nerves by exercise and open air.

To a man of Carr's affectionate, sympathetic nature, loneliness and isolation were peculiarly abhorrent. The idea of finding a mother in the bright, companionable woman he had always liked and admired, was very delightful. He earnestly hoped she would not refuse to accept him as her son. It comforted him too, to think that his money would have no influence upon her—she was a mother of whom any son might be proud, as Miss Barton said. Would she love him? Well, he would try to win her love.

His ride had cheered and invigorated him. After dinner, he was able to think of other things, and remembered Madame Zavadoskor's invitation to tea. He was greatly annoyed with himself, for his rudeness, and wrote at once a note full of such earnest apologies and prayers for an interview, that he had a reply sooner than he expected, naming the following afternoon for his visit.

Madame Zavadoskor, clad in morning gown of red-brown velvet and cream lace, was in her delightful boudoir, a cigarette between her lips, as she swayed herself gently to and fro in a rocking chair, the picture of luxurious idleness, when Carr entered, feeling a little embarrassed and ashamed of himself.

"Ah, monsieur!" she exclaimed, holding out one hand, and taking the cigarette from her lips with the other. "Have you left your manners in England? It is a legacy the nation needs,

but I should have kept them for my own use during my lifetime, had I been you."

Carr kissed the hand she extended with great respect.

"You must, indeed, think me an uncouth savage, dear madame. I can only urge in excuse for my almost *inexcusable*——" He paused for a word. "Forgetfulness" would never do, "negligence" was nearly as bad.

"Misconduct!" put in the countess with a fascinating smile as he hesitated.

"Yes, misconduct," continued Carr. "All I can say is that I was absorbed by a matter which, when I am able to explain it, you will acknowledge was absorbing, that is if you ever care to hear."

"Which, being interpreted, means that there is a *nouvelle*. Is it not so?" smiling benignly, and replacing the cigarette in her lips.

"Yes, it is," said Carr with a frank laugh.

"Then you are absolved. The excuse is admissible. Only forgive me—your general air—that boyish laugh—does not convey the idea of your being in love."

"We'll leave that question for the present. Tell me how have you been all these long months—and when did you return to Paris?"

"I returned little more than a fortnight ago. How have I been? I have been a victim to affairs and worry. I had to marry my son, and what an affair it was. I had to make love for him, poor fellow; for, though you would not think it, he has a strain of sentiment in his curiously mixed nature. And, unfortunately, this sentiment was all entwined round an Italian girl, a pretty creature enough, so I had some difficulty in disentangling him even temporarily. Unfortunately the charms of the young Countess Alexis lie in her lands and roubles. Then I had to smooth down the objections of my daughter-in-law's guardians, who were rather startled at the amount of the 'futur's' debts, which is not to be wondered at. Finally, I had to keep Alexis from the gaming tables for a few weeks at all events. This was the worst of all. And imagine! at the very last he escaped me, rushed away to Prince Gorlitz, one of the greatest gamblers in Europe; and, to my disgust, won a large sum. It put him in good humour, however, with his poor

little wife, as he fancies she brought him luck. How they are going on I can't tell. She does not write quite so cheerfully, but have I not had a dreadful time of it?"

"Dreadful!" echoed Carr. "I must say I am sorry for the bride."

"She is not worse off with my son than with any other woman's son," returned Madame Zavadoskoï, selecting another cigarette and offering the case to Carr. "She will be rather miserable for awhile, then, when she finds that her husband has, as usual, ceased to be her lover, why—she supplies the vacant place. It is always the same routine, certainly for the women of our class, and I suspect for most others also. My dear friend, there is no use in breaking your head or your heart against 'counsels of perfection.' You will never reform the world."

"No, I suppose not," returned Carr, who did not wish to discuss the question.

"Now, confidence for confidence. What have you been doing?—I heard you were in England."

"Yes, I was staying with Mr. Conroy, and had some capital hunting."

"Ah! And how is our charming *fin-de-siècle* Hypatia—Miss Frances?"

"Unfortunately Mrs. Conroy and her daughter were not at home. Mrs. Conroy is again obliged to winter abroad, so I had not the opportunity of seeing an English country house in full swing."

"I have promised to pay Mrs. Conroy a visit as soon as the 'Grand Prix' is over," said Madame Zavadoskoï. "You don't think I shall be bored there?"

"I should think not. Audeley Chase is an ideal abode."

"Did you see Ogilvie when you were in London?"

"I did once."

"What is he doing?"

"I don't know."

"Very likely you do not. Ogilvie is not a confiding person. Did you meet him at his club?"

"No, not at a club."

"In Society?"

"Yes, at the house of a relative of his. One of the rich eccentric old maids who seem peculiar to Great Britain."

"Ah, indeed! Friends of the Conroys?"

"No, I think not."

"Did Ogilvie introduce you to her?"

"No, I knew her through Madame Falk."

"I did not fancy she knew any of Ogilvie's people?"

"She knows heaps of Britishers."

Madame Zavadoskoř was silent for a moment. She had not yet got at all she wanted.

"Tell me," she resumed. "Do you know anything of that little Riddell girl who floated in amongst us so vaguely last winter?"

"Little!" repeated Carr. "Why she is taller than you are, Madame Zavadoskoř."

"Well, well. 'Little' means many things besides shortness of stature. She is little according to my ideas—but do you know anything of her?"

"Not much. She is well, and enjoyed her stay with the Conroys, so Madame Falk said."

"And went abroad with them?"

"No, she remained in England."

"Where is she staying?"

"In London. She is living with the rich old maid I mentioned," said Carr reluctantly, knowing his fair friend would have it, and fearing to show any inclination to conceal what he knew, though he was longing to take her off the scent.

"Ah! I suppose Madame Falk got her the engagement?"

"Very likely."

"Ah!" said Madame Zavadoskoř again. "I think I can put the pieces together. The pale, graceful—(I admit she is graceful, rare as grace is in Englishwomen)—and interesting orphan is taken by the rich old maid as secretary or companion.—(Poor child! *quel metier*)—Ogilvie, who no doubt backed up Madame Falk, or was himself the *Deus ex Machina*, pays dutiful visits to the aunt or cousin, and prosecutes the tender twilight platonic friendship, which began here a year ago, under the ægis of the elderly miss's immaculate respectability. One knows how these sort of innocent *liaisons* generally end. And Ogilvie is—Ogilvie! A man almost impossible to turn from his purpose—to baffle, or to resist. Still, he is loyal, and our little

friend might have a worse fate than find him, in a sense, the guardian of her future."

Carr felt a sudden thrill of rage against this easy, good-natured, unprincipled woman. Nay, instinct told him that she was actuated by a vague was it "vague"? dislike to the unoffending girl, which he felt was prompted by jealousy. For he had long ago perceived that Madame Zavadosko's regard for Ogilvie was no common liking. He could have struck her, so intolerable to him were the vile insinuations she uttered so carelessly.

"You should not judge of others by the class of people you have lived amongst," he said coolly. "If all thought and believed as you do, Society would fall to pieces from its own rottenness. I don't like Ogilvie, and you do; but he is an English gentleman, living within the influence of English public opinion, and I do not believe him worse than his fellows."

Madame Zavadosko burst into a fit of mocking laughter.

"This is too droll," she cried. "English public opinion! Just figure to yourself the trials both in the courts of law and the police, reported in the *Times*, and judge the conduct of your compatriots, from the owner of a donkey carriage or cart, to the high-minded, enlightened Progressive Member of Parliament, and the brutally intoxicated Peer of the realm! Do *these* show the influence of English public opinion? and is it due also to that benign spirit, that the most loathsome details are minutely set forth in the columns of the daily papers? We are ignorant and brutal in Russia, so of course we are *far* behind such indications of progress and civilization! How dare you insult me? My class! What is yours?" These last words with sudden, unusual, fierce earnestness.

"Your class is noble—mine that of the workers! I did not mean to insult you, madame, but your contempt for an inoffensive girl, whom I respect, stung me beyond my self-control. If my words were insulting, forgive them. I cannot help believing some things—so pray have some patience with my credulity."

"No. I have none. I despise all whited sepulchres, and Ogilvie amongst them. By-and-bye you will understand him and his motives of action! You provoking wild man of the woods," she continued, her fit of anger passing, "you have given me quite a sensation. I shall enjoy a cup of tea after it—but

you—you are quite too audacious. You ought to be at my feet imploring forgiveness."

"Behold me there!" cried Carr, seizing the opportunity offered by her change of mood. "And thank you a thousand times for showing me that you did not mean half you said."

"Ha! Do not be too sure of that," she returned, giving him her hand to kiss. "I know what I am talking about, you are figuratively dancing on nothing! When are you going back to your native wilds, that is the best place for you."

"Not directly—if you will permit me to remain a few months longer in Europe!"

"Very well, but do not offend me again—and you may come to my Thursdays. Another word — is Ogilvie coming to Paris?"

"I have not the faintest idea what he is going to do! Now before I can again offend, I shall retreat—adieu till Thursday," said Carr, who began to be anxious to return and look for a note at his hotel.

"Come again and quarrel," said the Countess. "Life is growing more and more intolerably dull. It is quite exciting to be angry, and not unbecoming, eh?"

"Far from it, your anger is—diabolically charming."

She smiled, and kissed her hand to him, as he bowed himself out.

"And ten months ago, I thought the day lost when I did not see that woman, and listen to her clever talk!" said Carr to himself, as he walked to his hotel. "What a pleasant, amusing, unscrupulous Devil she is! and at moments hateful in her cynical scepticism—her utter ignorance of the difference between right or wrong, she has the fleeting passions of a man, dashed with the whims and fancies of a woman—and yet not all bad! I suspect—she knows Ogilvie better than anyone else. He cannot be the scoundrel *she* thinks him! Well, if Madame Falk accepts me as her son, she can adopt May Riddell, or do anything else she likes! and I wish to heaven the matter were settled and that nice young creature under her care." A picture of May rose before his eyes as he thought. There was something very taking in her gentle composure, her steady quiet eyes, in the quick sweet smile that lit them up, the candour and simplicity of her speech and manner—utterly free as both were, from the faintest tinge of

affectation or unreality. She had, somehow, grown fairer and franker since Carr had first known her. "I was a blind idiot not to feel the charm there was about her, and to think that *such* a woman was only to be a plaything because she had neither rank nor wealth, was the notion of a barbarian! If this is the outcome of advanced civilization, the sooner we go back to savagery the better." Then the idea of the impending interview with Madame Falk rose above all else, and absorbed his imagination.

No communication awaited him from Miss Barton, however, and he got through the rest of the day somehow, but not very happily.

At last, on his return from the opera, where he had looked in to while away an hour or two, he found the earnestly-desired missive :

"She has been terribly upset," it said, "and is rather incredulous, but quite willing to see you. Come early to-morrow."

Carr was greatly excited by the prospect of this interview. Could it be that he should ever know the sympathy, the tenderness of a mother? Like most men, Carr would have blushed to acknowledge the longing he felt for someone with whom he could be all and all—someone belonging to himself. He dreamed strange dreams of Madame Falk rejecting him, as the son of a cruel father, and rose feeling more nervous than he ever did before in all his healthy, active life. When he found himself at Madame Falk's door, he thought that never had he been kept so long waiting before. It was opened by Miss Barton herself, who looked agitated.

"I am so thankful you have come! She is just worrying herself to death—wanting to see you one minute, wishing you wouldn't come the next—she's in the salon."

And Carr entered.

Madame Falk had heard his step, and stood up to receive him. She was very pale, and her usually bright eyes were heavy and sad.

"Thank you, dear Madame Falk, for seeing me!" exclaimed Carr, and his pleasant voice was a little unsteady. He did not venture to offer his hand, but his fine eyes sought hers with an imploring expression which touched her.

"You have told my cousin such a strange story. I want to

hear it from your own lips. It is almost impossible to believe—I mean the conclusion you have come to! Do not think me unfriendly or unkind—you are—not a sort of son to be lightly rejected, and you have nothing to gain from me. Sit down and tell me all.”

Carr drew a chair opposite, and began, in a low tone but very distinctly, to recapitulate the story of his life. He had thought over every detail so carefully that he was able to state his case with great distinctness, and as he proceeded he saw the effect his words produced.

Madame Falk clasped her hands, and the gaze she fastened on his face grew eager and intent. When he came to the death of his father, she plied him with quick questions:

“Was—was this German woman, Mrs. Carr, really kind and attentive to him? She did not leave him to die alone? Was he, Carr, with his father at the last?”

Her interlocutor was able to assure her that the dying man had been tenderly cared for, that he had talked a great deal in German, and that his kind nurse had told the speaker he constantly mentioned a beloved wife. Then Carr saw that his hearer was trembling all over.

At last his tale was done, and he waited eagerly for Madame Falk’s words.

“It is all too wonderful for belief,” she said, slowly looking at him as if almost frightened—“yet the history hangs together! The name too—your age. I wish you had some writing of your father’s, that would be proof positive.”

“The few lines I possess are with my papers in Australia. My father left nothing behind him from which any clue to his former life could be gathered. I have a few sketches which he drew to amuse me when I was beginning to take a little more intelligent interest in things, and a small book.”

“What book?” cried Madame Falk eagerly.

“A copy of Burns’ poems.”

“Is there any writing on its first page?” Again she clasped her hands.

“Yes,” he returned. “I have often read them, they are, ‘To Bernard, with loving good wishes from E. B.’ and the date, 1854.” Madame Falk rose with a cry, turning so deadly white that Carr sprang to her side, fearing she might faint.

"I gave that book to your father," she exclaimed, "in the dear bright days of love and hope. Why—why was everything wrenched from me?"

"Do you then accept me for your son?" said Carr, holding out his hands to her. "I at least am saved for you from the wreck."

"Ah! no, you are not the son I lost!"—her voice broke—"the sweet boy that depended on me for everything! You, a tall, strong, independent man, do not restore him to me. You are a stranger! My son that I used to hush to sleep and cradle in my arms is gone for ever!"

"Then let me waken afresh the mother's love in you," urged Carr. "Have I not been a sufferer too? Do you not believe that every fellow who has a true man's heart yearns for a mother's tenderness? I know I have all my life; let me atone for the suffering my unhappy father inflicted on you. I—I feel as if I could have a son's affection for you."

"You must think me harsh," said Madame Falk, the tears streaming from her eyes. "I do not deserve your kindness. Let me look well at you," and, laying her hand on his arm, she perused his features. "Your eyes," she said, "your eyes only, remind me of my boy. My little Rupert, that was my boy's name, but there are tones in your voice which always seemed familiar to me."

"Mother," cried Carr, suddenly clasping her in his arms, "try to love your son! Let me bring some sunset glow into the evening of your life!"

The warmth of his appeal was more than Madame Falk's kind heart could withstand. "Give me time," she sobbed, resting her head against his shoulder, "and I will learn to regard you as I believe you deserve."

* * * * *

Carr was too discreet to stay much longer. It was he who summoned the expectant Sarah—who, seeing the state of affairs at a glance, shook hands effusively with her discovered kinsman.

"Well," she exclaimed, "I do not think you are a son to be ashamed of. What a popular pair of elderly gentlewomen we shall be by-and-bye when it comes out that the popular Australian belongs to us!"

"As to that," said Madame Falk, "let nothing be made public until we have discussed matters. There are many points to be

considered. I feel so exhausted, I must send you away, my dear Mr. Carr."

"Mr. Carr!" he repeated reproachfully.

"It is all so strange, I do not know what to call you," she returned.

"I will not intrude any longer," he said tenderly. "I trust that soon my coming at any hour will be neither unwelcome nor unusual, dear mother! I seem to know what to call you!"

"Let me look at you," said Madame Falk laying her hand on his arm, touched by the pathos of his tones, and gazing steadfastly into his eyes. "Yes!" she murmured, "when I look for it, I see something of your father's expression. My God! how cruel it has all been!" Covering her face with her hands, the greatly tried woman burst into a passion of tears, and Carr gently drew her to him, while the sudden sense of a supporting arm, the first she had felt for long years of struggling toil, sent an extraordinary thrill through her veins.

"You are too good to me!" she murmured. "When I recover myself and realise what you are to me, I shall reciprocate your kindness more fully!"

"You will try to like me, to love me," said Carr imploringly. "I will go now, but I may come to-morrow?"

"To-morrow!" cried Miss Barton indignantly, "no such thing. Come in to dinner at seven; your mother will have had time to rest and collect her thoughts, and realise how good it is to have a nice grown-up son like you. You come to dinner, mind!"

"Shall I?" asked Carr, looking to Madame Falk.

"Yes, do!" she said cordially, her heart smiting her for the reluctance she had shown in accepting the son who seemed so eager to call her mother.

"Then I shall come gladly," he exclaimed, shaking hands cordially with Miss Barton.

Madame Falk threw herself into a chair beside the table, on which she leant her elbows and hid her face in her hands.

"Well, Esther," cried Miss Barton, "I am thankful, dear, that you will have some reward for your patience and endurance at last. I am a little more inclined to believe in Providence than I was a week ago. This young man *is* a son worth having!"

"It seems to me that he comes too late!" said Madame Falk

in a low tone. "How can I take this strange young man to my heart? I cannot associate him with the fair-haired boy who used to climb on my knee and insist on kisses and forgiveness when he had been naughty! No, he is gone for ever! But I believe this stranger is the same individual; I believe it with my reason, not with my heart. But I will try to love him; a new liking may, probably will, spring up. I always thought him likeable, but he will never be to me the son who was torn from me!"

"Of course, Esther, you are greatly upset, but it is sheer flying in the face of Providence not to receive such a young man with open arms. Put yourself in his place, suppose you had been longing for a son and found one all ready, of best possible pattern. How would you feel if he said, 'No really, you are not a bit what I expected,' and declined you with thanks? Don't be unkind and ungrateful. Here's a cigarette; just compose yourself. Lie down and sleep awhile, and then put on your most becoming costume to welcome such a godsend in the shape of a son as few women have ever had! Leave the dinner to me; I'll see that you don't starve. God bless you, my dear! There are happy, tranquil days before you."

With which benediction Miss Barton vanished.

(To be continued.)

Stephen Dolet.

BY EMILIA AYLMER GOWING.

THIS sixteenth century sufferer for science sake, known amongst his learned compeers as Stephanus Doletus, may be ranked among those remarkable men of every age who have built their lives into the great temple of human progress while effacing their own personality in their work. Thus lived and laboured the master-masons of old, who have left us the cathedrals and castles conceived and accomplished in those earnest times by men, themselves nameless to us, whose labours stand in our midst, the admiration of our modern world. The hold of these upon solid earth seems well-nigh as firm and fixed as that of our own perishable and renewing species, yet to whom we owe their erection we can scarcely tell. Of the same kind are many of our benefactors—the makers of our laws, our rights, our freedom of thought and conscience, responsible only at the bar of God. Of such was Etienne Dolet.

He was born in Orleans, on the 3rd of August, 1509, the same year as his more famous fellow-sufferer, Servetus. It is curious to trace the two lives, step by step, running in parallel grooves, so close to each other; it is hard to believe they never crossed and became acquainted, as friend knows friend. Michael Servetus, the son of a Spanish notary, was born at Villanueva, in Arragon. His father sent him to France, to the great university of Toulouse, to study the law. Of Dolet's obscure parentage we know nothing. Kind and powerful friends favoured the marvellously clever boy, to whom wild stories attached as he grew up among strangers. A mythic origin was attributed to him; he was said to be one of Francis the First's love-children, the fruit of a passing fancy for some frail, fair maid of Orleans. A baseless fiction. As a lad, sent to study in Paris by some generous patron, he devoured the Latin language and worshipped Cicero, gulping down, as he grew, huge draughts of all sorts of mixed learning. At seventeen he made his way to Italy, the land of dreams and promise. For three years he studied at Padua working day

and night, with such brief rest as Nature's bare necessity imposed. Simon de Villeneuve, his master, dying, he quitted that seat of learning and attached himself to the illustrious Jean du Bellay-Langey, Bishop of Bayonne, afterwards Cardinal, a powerful churchman, who stood his life-long friend. At this time the bishop was charged with a political mission to Venice, and offered Dolet a secretary's berth. Here the young man spent a questionable year's labours, making acquaintance with the ruling powers of the world, the agnostic poem of Lucretius, and the wiles of womankind, falling a victim to the perilous charms of a Venetian beauty, Elena.

On the return of the embassy to France in 1530, the bishop advised his *protégé* to study the law, as a safer road to fortune than unassisted literature. Thus he, too, became a student at Toulouse much about the same time as the Spaniard, Servetus.

Ill luck went with bold thinkers in those days, when free-living, easy-going Francis the First was at odds with Italy and the Empire—with indifferent success. The good king, the "rising sun" of France, was just at this time plunged into very troubled waters, amidst the opposing streams of Reform and established authority in the things of conscience. In a liberal fit, he promoted the broad churchman, du Bellay-Langey, to the bishopric of Paris, so near his own person that a kindly whisper on behalf of a favoured pupil might reach the royal ear when the happy moment came.

Just then His Majesty's faithful parliament at Toulouse felt itself bound in duty to rush counter to new leanings towards freedom of conscience and the right of a man to the possession of his own soul. Certainly Dolet, in his hot youth, found little space to lay his head in the fanatical city of the south.

At the great school of law, where students of every tongue and country were gathered by a common pursuit, each nation had its own society and speech day, and the new comer, already known by repute, was unanimously chosen as Orator by the French faction. With unheard-of rashness he improved the opportunity to stigmatise the citizens of Toulouse as barbarians; to jibe at their local superstitions; and boldly take them to task for the recent burning alive of a learned professor, Jean Caturce, on a baseless charge of Lutheranism. Dolet, according to those of his own way of thinking, possessed at this early time all the

qualities of a born speaker. He had no equal as an orator; persuasion, power, the eloquence of action, feature, and a voice, that lent itself to every change of subject, every tone of feeling; he had all in his favour. Nourished from a child with Ciceronian lore, he brought the strength and method of Rome along with the "French fury" of his mother tongue, to bear upon his outraged antagonists—the local "powers that be." Small wonder that, as a poet, he was worsted at the Floral Games, the famous literary tournament of the southern city, and as a rebellious scholar expelled from the university and town.

On the 1st of August, 1533, Dolet took refuge in Lyons, being furnished with a recommendation to Sebastian Gryphius, an eminent printer of that city. His first care was to revenge himself on his persecutors by two stinging harangues published with the aid of his new friend, but with no printer's name nor record of place. They were entitled, "*Stephani Doleti Orationes duæ in Tholosam.*" Farther to secure the author against possible consequences, a zealous friend and travelling companion, one Simon Finetius, affected to have published the papers on his proper responsibility, the author being disabled by illness from standing up on his own behalf. Thus we must appreciate Dolet's prudence as a shrewd, practical philosopher, rather than his rash zeal as a martyr to any faith.

This time he did not remain long a resident in the provincial capital. Paris, once tasted, attracted him like most Frenchmen. Disgusted with law, he went in, at twenty-four, to gain his degree as Doctor of Medicine. While thus engaged he produced his Latin work, "*On the Imitation of Cicero*," published in quarto by his Lyons friend, Gryphius. This was the fruit of his life's labour up to that time, by which he rose at one leap to the first rank amongst critical scholars.

Having thus sown his dragon's teeth, he was met by a fierce crop of enemies, springing upon him right and left, headed by no less doughty a champion than Julius Cæsar Scaliger. Whether or no any word not to be found in the pages of Cicero was permissible to be used by modern writers in the Roman tongue, was the burning question, the most pernicious cause of civil war then raging between the two opposite camps that divided the learned world. Dolet seems to have loved the fun, with a boy's keen zest in mischief and high animal spirits.

Next came his greater work, "Commentaries on the Latin Language," in splendid form and type, from the press of Gryphius in 1636. Great difficulties preceded its appearance. Early in the year before, a decree to suspend all printing had been actually wrested from the weak-willed King Francis by that retrograde collegiate body, the Sorbonne, as a crushing measure against the spread of heresy—mutilations and burnings having failed of the mark. No mean array of victims had fed the purifying fires of orthodoxy since Dolet had taken up his abode in Paris. This gruesome work was still going merrily on, although the King, in a liberal fit, would occasionally step in with his royal pardon at awkward times, and persistently abstained from gracing such edifying shows with his royal presence—fearing perhaps the sight and scent of horrors as a prince very tender to himself.

Before the book could appear, a special privilege had to be given, through the intercession of friends in high places, by this most Christian king.

Dolet went to Lyons to work with the printer in the great production. So faithful were their joint labours, that but eight clerical errors were discovered in the whole text. The title page was in itself an Elysian field, peopled by the Immortals. Solomon appeared between Socrates, Pythagoras, Aristotle and Plato. Beneath these, Homer knelt before the fount of Parnassus, surrounded by "the nine," and crowned with laurel by Calliope. Ten great ones flanked the page on either side, poets and sages of Greece and Rome. With such words as these the young author launched his work on the broad and perilous sea of fame :

"First memorials of my art, of my youth, go forth at last with happy auguries ; too long held back by dull delays, see the desired day, and rise upon the world. Dread not the speech of insolent tongues, but go, athirst of light, in scorn of foolish fear. Go, first memorials of my art, of my youth, go forth at last, with happy auguries."

Latin, in those days, was the common language of educated men in every country. By this book, Dolet became a leading citizen of the rising Republic of Letters, and more—the friend of Princes. At what cost he had attained such envied eminence, the young savant's own words attest, in his letters to his famed

confrère, Budé, and to King Francis, now his staunch patron. How many days and nights devoured by labour, had gone to the making of this great, strange work, which was no mere dry desert of scientific facts, but a living panorama of the Men of the Time set in the dazzling modern light of the Renaissance—their mighty work, in which Dolet had bravely borne his part. For the sake of this, he had gone many a time without food or sleep. Often he had denied himself all rest, all leisure, all recreation, all intercourse with friends, all lawful pleasure, the very uses of life. But he looked to posterity, and dreamed of an eternity for his name—remembered now by how few? Yet of such men are our rights and liberties born.

At twenty-six, he had left his youth behind him in the bitter strife. His lined forehead, bald up to the crown, so aged him, to all seeming, that strangers guessed his years at forty. His work being original, new, and daring in the extreme, broke open a hornet's nest of rivals and critics. Dolet revelled in the hostile hurly-burly, powerless as yet to touch him. Did he ever meet his kindred spirit, in those days of storm and stress? Servetus was now in Paris, a fellow-student of the healing art, and indulging in the dangerous amusement of reading the Bible. Dolet's less harmful recreations were poetry and music, whenever an hour of leisure came.

Having touched the zenith of success, Dolet was soon to feel the first pressure of fate's heavy hand. On the last day of February 1536, he had the misfortune to kill a man. A painter named Compaing, his mortal enemy—for what cause we know not—waylaid him in Lyons, where he was living at the time, immersed in learned labours. No tyro with the sword, he met and slew the aggressor. Immediately, a large detachment of the watch pursued the man-slayer, with intent to shut him up in a dungeon, innocent or not. Dolet fled, kept in hiding for the night, and at daybreak left the town, protected by an escort of friends. Through winter cold and tempest, he made his way to Auvergne, "where the great river Allier flows by the forest trees, snow-crowned, like white-headed kings."

The fugitive sprang from his horse, and flung himself into a boat. He urged the oarsman, with liberal promises, to push his way against the current through ice and troubled waters into the Loire, and up to Orleans, Dolet's birth-place. From thence,

taking horse again, the desperate man rode for life towards Paris, the Louvre, the king.

Thus, according to his own poetic account, he addressed his sovereign :

"O king, full of love for justice! In the name of that justice I appeal with confidence to thee. I own I have taken a man's life, but pressing peril constrained me to such violence. If in this I have followed the first law of our great mother Nature, if also civil right permits such self-defence, my plea is just; sustain it by granting my pardon. I admit the fatal mischance; it has convinced me we are all the playthings of human vicissitude. My hand is not made for deeds of blood. But I was driven to fight my foe, and owe my life to deadly weapons. Mercy, I implore, mercy, O my king! If the sword of thy law justly strikes the guilty, turn on the innocent thy eye of pity, and save the man whom fate would fain destroy."

Not only did the king forgive, and dismiss the suppliant with triumphant acquittal, but a brilliant banquet was held in honour of the happy event, and the rescued savant was fêted by the most famous of his "brethren in Apollo," Budé, Bérauld, Macrin, Bourbon, Dampierre, the young Vulteius, Marot the poet, who clothed the Psalms of David in the language of modern Gaul, Rabelais the mighty jester who could shake the learned concourse with peal on peal of Titanic laughter—after the great conversation had passed in review the absent glories of the age, Erasmus, Melancthon, Bembo and Vida.

These revels done, the worker returned to Lyons. Was he aware of the perils that beset the lightbearer in that dim daybreak of religious thought? Even the "Sun of France," the "Protector of Letters," loved art and learning in despite of his surroundings. Behind and beside him sat the enemies of human knowledge. Very powerful in his counsels was the Cardinal de Tournon, to whom Dolet addressed himself as to a friendly patron—a narrow, reactionary prelate, apt to turn with a back-handed stroke upon the too clever wielder of the pen.

Despite the clemency of the king, the law would have its say in Dolet's case, and he had to enter a prison in Lyons. With time, difficulty, and much insistence, his release was obtained from the Cardinal de Tournon, while the king was busy with his troublesome, unprofitable last wars.

Dolet was now intent upon the ways of peace. He married, and established himself in the city of two rivers, as a printer. A privilege for ten years, to print his own works, and any others, was granted him by the king, dated Moulins 6th March, 1537, witnessed by my lord the Cardinal de Tournon. All the same, Dolet's second volume of Commentaries on the Latin tongue followed the course of the first, from the press of his friend, Gryphius.

His house was in the Rue Mercière, where he traded under the sign of the Golden Hatchet, "*doloire*," a play upon his name. Here one son, Claude, was born to him, and, as he told the king, being at rest with a home and family, he sought to use the intelligence and industry God had granted him, to the profit of letters and science, and the gain of an honest livelihood for him and his. Thus, by the tenderness of conjugal love and the fondness of paternity, he gave earnest to the ruling powers of a loyal, safe career of good work. Having made his reputation as a writer in the grand old Roman tongue, he turned his hand to French. His ambition was to aid in the moulding and fixing of his native speech, in verse and prose. His king and his little son were the dear objects of his poetic homage, while the contemporary history of his country supplied him with a theme of universal interest. Starting from the battle of Marignan, Francis the First's youthful triumph, he traced with a faithful pen the stirring events which marked that prince's chequered career of glory and defeat, rising at times to the heights of eloquence, when he had to tell how the fury of French valour swept the field with martial thunder beneath the proud looks of Francis, chief of men. At the end of Dolet's books was usually seen his chosen device, a hatchet in the grasp of a resolute hand, in the act of smiting a fallen tree set in some quaint border of scroll, leaf, and wood nymph. Beneath was read the motto; "*Preserve me, O Lord, from the calumnies of men.*"

Already, it would seem, a sense of coming danger, a feeling of injustice and oppression from the great of the earth, haunted him in the more thoughtful hours of his busy life. Yet would he yield no jot of his appointed task to fear or human respect. Against such dereliction of duty he steeled himself, and already warned his little son, in verses written for the child's future,

under a presentiment that his own days to come would be too few to see the boy grown a man.

Within a couple of years after he went into business, a mediæval strike for higher wages and better food was organised by the working printers against the masters. Dolet joined the progressive side—albeit at times he could come down with thunderous fury upon the self-conceit and monstrous blundering of the poor printer; and by such views, in advance of his time, he drew upon himself the whole mass of seething hatred, envy and jealous wrath long gathering against him, as a too successful interloper in the craft.

This was a small thing. Dolet's real danger came from another quarter, the ancient powers of ignorance and superstition, embodied in the visible church and hooded in monkish cowl. This element within the realm would often swallow up the will and authority of a sovereign, already half disabled by many defeats, disappointments, and the stealthy grip of disease. Against such enemies of human reason, Dolet had sinned past pardon, as early as 1536, in his *Commentaries*, nor had he done aught by his pen or press in the interval to show cause why the old offence should be condoned. Thus he had dared to write of the august, implacable Sorbonne:

"I cannot disguise under a cowardly silence the infamy of certain monsters in human shape, who, being minded to crush the heart out of our future in literature, have thought, in these days, to annihilate the art of printing. Thought to do it! Why they have counselled to that horrible murder Francis de Valois, king of France, the sole protector of letters and literary men, their warmest advocate and their most loving father! And what cause have they assigned? But one; that, in their opinion, the errors of Luther found too apt instruments of publicity in literature and the press. Ridiculous College of Fools! As if the soldier's arms were in themselves evil and fatal, and ought to be put down, because they can inflict wounds and death! With what then should brave men defend themselves and their country? Must it not be with arms? Doubtless, these weapons are sometimes turned to evil, criminal use. But who does this? Why you, worthy champions of iniquity and crime!

"Happily, the abominable, monstrous plot concocted by the

Sorbonne, that heap of drunkards and sophists, was crushed by the wisdom and prudence of two great men, William Budé, and the great light of science in our age, John du Bellay, bishop of Paris, a prelate of consummate virtue no less than high dignity."

In these hot words, we hear the printer's indignation speak and protest against the annihilation of his trade, while the earnest thinker appeals for justice to the common rights of his fellow men.

Sooth to say, Dolet had kept filling up the measure of his offences ever since he had owned a printing press to "fight for his own hand" against the powers of darkness. He had printed the works of his friend, Clement Marot, a poet too keen of insight into the future of human thought, who had been known to eat meat on forbidden days, and, worse than all, to publish the Scriptures in vernacular French. In these offences, Dolet abetted him, in the press and at table. Upon these charges Dolet was denounced to the Holy Inquisition; under the authority of the Archbishop of Lyons he was pronounced to be an evil, scandalous, schismatic promoter and defender of heresies and errors, and as such handed over to the secular arm—which meant death by the hangman's hands or the more terrible agony of fire.

Thus brought face to face with an awful doom, the prisoner once more made appeal to the clemency of the king, on the 2nd of October, 1542. He protested that "in all the books he had written and printed, of his own or others, he had never understood, nor intended, any error or anything contrary to the faith, the commandments of God, and our mother, Holy Church—and as to the eating of meat on days forbidden by the Church, he had done so under medical and clerical authority permitting the lapse on account of his long illness, without scandal or contempt of the ordinances of the Church, whose obedient son he ever professed to be."

Notwithstanding this act of contrition, given in face of the menacing fire, the heretic's certain doom, Dolet was flung into prison by the Church's power and kept for fifteen months in a dungeon, till one worthy bishop, Pierre du Chastel, procured his release. This truly Christian act, it seems, was hotly attacked

by Cardinal de Tournon, Dolet's somewhat "protector" and friend. Du Chastel made noble answer :

"I have on my side the example of Christ, of the Apostles, and all those who have cemented with their blood the building of our Holy Church. Such example teaches me, that the true part of a bishop and a priest of God is to turn away the spirit of kings from barbarism and cruelty, and incline it to meekness, clemency and mercy. You who accuse me of forgetting my office as a prelate, know you, my lord, that I can more justly turn the charge against you? We two are here of opposite opinion. What then? One of us fulfils the duty of a bishop, this do I : the other takes upon himself the hangman's trade. You are that man."

By this the king was moved to full, free pardon. But the victim was not easily snatched from the Moloch fires of fanatical hate. The Parliament set itself against the formal orders of the sovereign ; the letters of pardon, granted in February, 1536, for the misadventure of Compaing's death, were called into question after seven years' interval, and it was not till the 13th October, 1543, that Francis's reiterated commands prevailed for the captive's release.

Thus cheated of the man, the Parliament of Paris took its revenge on his published books. A large number of these, including a translation of the Bible, and some works of Calvin, were burned with every circumstance of opprobrium, in default of the human sacrifice. The obnoxious printed matter was solemnly consumed to ashes in front of the porch of Notre Dame, to the sound of the great bell of that church, "for the edification of the people and the advance of the Christian and Catholic faith." Such conspicuous ill-success hunted down the apostle of freedom, born out of the time. What matter? Restored to the blessings of home love, with a wife who had sorrowed for him as for the dead, through the long weary months of his captivity, and a child just old enough to know him as a father, Dolet could make a haven for himself amongst his beloved companions, the great minds of old Rome, and new-born Europe's eager searchers after truth.

Through these years, Servetus had been, partly, at least, a sojourner in Lyons, and engaged for a time in Dolet's trade, as a corrector for the press. So much the more their meeting

seems probable. This would have been an added danger to Dolet. Servetus from his youth applied his keen mind to the dissection of mysteries other than those of the human frame. He had almost, if not quite, discerned the circulation of the blood. He could not content himself with preaching any such scientific heresy, but must needs push the materialistic scalpel through the veils of faith, thus rushing within the sanctuary where no professing Christian might dare to tread. Like Locke, he more than hinted that the soul of man might be material ; that it might be within the power of God to enable matter to think. If he thought that the doctrines of Reform gave warrant for such assault, he was taught his error betimes. After publishing, under more or less precaution, several anti-Trinitarian essays, he was fain to adopt the disguise of a good Catholic and go to mass at Vienne, where he practised as a physician—his natural vocation—for several years, under the name of Villeneuve, adapted into French from that of his native town in Spain.

Whether or not entangled with such an associate, Dolet seems to have been hopelessly imprudent or unfortunate—speaking, after the manner of men. Within three months after his release two packages of books were seized at the gates of Paris, bearing outside in large, startling letters, the well-known name, Dolet. Probably it was a ruse of his enemies, but both packages contained the most compromising matter that could be laid to his charge, culled out of the literature published at his house in Lyons, or the prohibited works issued from the Calvinistic presses of Geneva ; the whole cunningly addressed so as to make him responsible for both imports. In January, 1545, he was again seized, when at table with his family, on the *fête* day, " Jour des Rois," just as he was about to drink to the health of the king. Thus suddenly he was torn from his home, and flung into gaol ; but custom had made him wise in prison lore, and he made good his escape on the third day. He wrote a pleasant rhymed account of the adventure to his friend, the king, something after this spirit :

" So please you, sire most debonnair,
I missed the taste of freedom's air,
My studies, and, in prison hold,
I feared to perish with the cold.
Resolved my liberty to gain,
A merry, artful tale I feign,

And tempt my jailor to carouse
 On muscat wine, left in my house,
 While I should certain moneys touch
 Still wasting in my debtor's clutch,
 Till I at home could make demand
 And take my due with my own hand.
 A rare good chance ! So, for my sake,
 To his own interest awake,
 My jailor asked the friendly guard
 To sup that night within the ward ;
 And broached to them our deep design—
 Good men and true, who loved good wine.
 Next morrow, in the dawning gray,
 At set of moon, we took our way
 By two and two, in close array.
 I in the midst, as tame and meek
 As a young bride with blushing cheek
 Led to the altar, played my part
 Of whining fool, with all the art
 Of Reynard, when he cheats the pack,
 And doubles till they lose his track ;
 Peering about with stealthy eye
 To 'scape the scent and murderous cry.

" We cross the river, and once more
 I stand before mine own house door,
 Above the Saone, and at a sign
 'Twas opened by a man of mine
 Our merry party to admit,
 And then flung to—with ready wit.
 'Twas done ! From room to room I race—
 My guardians, strangers to the place,
 Hard on my heels, till in their face
 A doo clapt to. I let them rage,
 Like angry nightingales in cage ;
 And then I sped on flying feet
 To safety ! never deer so fleet
 Nor startled hare before the hound
 With maddened course shot o'er the ground."

The poet concludes by demanding his life in these noble lines :

" Live will I, not my years to waste
 The slave of wine and pampered taste ;
 Live will I, for my country's praise—
 Save tyranny cut short my days,
 I'll bear abroad the name of France,
 Her written story so enhance,
 And our own language so adorn
 That strangers never more shall scorn
 The speech that deeds so high records,
 Though now held poor and scant of words."

Again, in another epistle, he pleads for the worth of a human life :

“ Is man a thing of little worth,
 But as a fly, or worm of earth
 Ruthlessly crushed and cast away ?
 Is man created in a day,
 And taught, and trained to virtue's law ?
 Of no more price than rush or straw
 Dare you account the noble mind
 That leaves the common herd behind ? ”

Dolet wrote from Piedmont. There he had found a secure sanctuary where he could live and work in peace. Love of wife and child, and the fond tongues of friendship and home, called out to him from France, but even for their sakes he should never have returned. His merciless enemies grew bold, as they noted and marked the growing infirmities of his one firm friend, the king. Francis was now but the shadow of himself, gliding sadly, aimlessly, down the weary hill in sickness and sorrow, and the deepening dusk, like a brief bright day, closed in by darkening clouds before the afternoon was spent.

In dedicating to the king those poetic epistles collected into a book under the ominous title of “*The Second Hell*,” Dolet thus describes the circumstances of his fatal recall :

“ Returning lately from Piedmont with the ‘*Old Bands*’ to make my way in their company to the camp set up by your Majesty in Champagne, affection and paternal love constrained me, as I passed through Lyons, to forget all risk and danger for the sake of seeing my little son, and visiting my family. Being four or five days in my own home, I did not fail to satisfy my mind by looking through my treasures, to make sure there was nothing spoiled or lost. My treasures are neither gold nor silver, gems, nor any such perishable things, but rather the efforts of my mind, both in Latin and in your French language ; treasures of far more consequence than earthly riches. Therefore do I prize them with singular esteem. For through them shall I live after my death, and by them shall witness be borne that I have not lived in this world as a man idle and without use.”

Wife and child and dearly treasured writings were not to be his for long. Dolet was re-arrested by one Master Jacques Devaulx, an authority from whose grip it would seem he had escaped, who put in a claim for 1,000 crowns for charges in recapturing the

runaway, and transmitting him safe and sound as a prisoner to the Conciergerie in Paris.

On the 4th November, 1544, Dolet was brought before the Faculty of Theology. A translation he had made of a passage from Plato into French, was brought against him as damning proof of the capital charge of heresy. The Reverend Doctors, ignorant of Greek, quoted from the book they called "Acochius," meaning "Axiochus," one of the Socratic dialogues on death, setting forth the immortal life of the soul. The Athenian thus reasons :

"For as it is certain that death touches not the living, so, as to the dead, they are not. So, death is not with thee now, for thou hast not died, nor, when thou dost die, will death be with thee, for then thou shalt be nothing."

This, spoken of the body, as liable to suffering, was not understood in such sense by the holy fathers ; the too faithful translation was judged heretical, and conformable to the opinions of the Sadducees and Epicureans. It was badly translated, they averred, and contrary to Plato's sense, who never wrote the words : "thou shalt be nothing." *Συ γὰρ οὐκ ἔσει.* "Thou shalt not be," were perhaps the literal sense ; a hair's breadth quite broad and strong enough to hang a man.

"Rien du tout." For those three monosyllables, Dolet was condemned to the stake. The Parliament of Paris so decreed. The prisoner, Dolet, was sentenced to be taken from the Conciergerie, drawn in a cart to the Place Maubert, hanged on a gibbet, and afterwards his body to be burned, together with his books, and reduced to ashes ; all his goods to be confiscated to the king. And the court ordered that, previous to this manner of death, Dolet should be tortured, as a warning to his companions.

Was this done ? We have no absolute proof. It is beyond question that, in those dread times, men's consciences were brought to consent to the most revolting cruelties, as the surest means of keeping the faith in human traditions, by which the ordinances of God were overlaid. The madness that sought to honour Him by defacing His created image, was well nigh universal, and even in our horror there mingles a strain of pity for the fanatic executioners as well as the victims of that age of strife and struggle between darkness and light.

King Francis was fast dying ; the prince of many faults and at least one virtue ; the staunch defender of all men born in his day with greater mental stature than their fellows. This fatal year 1645 closed upon Dolet as a condemned prisoner, with no voice to speak a word for mercy in the council or at the court of his prince, himself so soon to follow the captive into the land of silence.

In his condemned cell Dolet bore witness to the eternal hope that was within him, by a noble hymn in his own French language that deserves to be remembered amongst the grandest utterances of the martyrs of his day.

On the anniversary of his birth, the 3rd of August, 1646, when he attained the age of thirty-seven years, the last hour sounded on earth for the aspiring restless spirit that had fed, insatiable, on knowledge and wisdom beyond the reaches of his time. Standing before the gallows and the fire, he could make a jingle of words—the passion of the sixteenth century writers, Shakespeare not excepted. Looking round on the crowd, assembled to the show, he said :

“Non dolet ipse Dolet, sed pia turba Dolet.” Not Dolet himself grieves, but the pitying crowd.

The mounted officer in charge of the execution turned the tables on the condemned man with ready wit, saying :

“Non pia turba dolet, sed dolet ipse Dolet.” Not the pitying crowd grieves, but Dolet himself.

And so, with grim humour, they hanged and burned him. At the last moment something resembling a retraction was extracted from the weakness of the flesh by sharp pressure from the executioner—so, at least, it was reported. All being ready the minister of the law bade the doomed man “think of his salvation,” or rather, the credit of his murderers. Dolet made no haste to satisfy this demand, until the hangman announced his mission, to require a public “act of faith” from his appointed victim.

“You must,” he said, “invoke the Holy Virgin and St. Stephen, your patron, whose feast we keep to-day, and if you do not—I see what I shall have to do.”

This meant, in case of disobedience, that the prisoner’s tongue should be cut out, and his body burned alive, not mercifully dead.

Dolet uttered the compulsory prayer, and furthermore, prompted by the hangman, warned the gathered crowd to read his books with much circumspection, repeating three times that they contained many things which he did not understand—ambiguous terms which might be safely predicated of most theological literature of his time.

So speaking dubiously, he was lifted up on the gallows ; his body cut down when dead, and committed to the flames. An anonymous contemporary lent him the following last words :

" Go, my spirit, straight to heaven,
Pure and clean from earthly leaven,
And thou body, float o'er wind,
Like the name I leave behind."

The well-known Théodore de Bèze bemoaned his friend with this fine classical image :

" The fire was crushed by floods of rain,
And Dolet seemed to breathe again ;
Sudden, o'erhead the thunder broke—
Thus the great God in anger spoke ;
' Cease, tuneful sisters, to defend
Your poet, let my son ascend
To heaven from the burning pyre ;
Even thus did Hercules aspire. ' "

So ended a sad and brief career on earth. The name of Etienne Dolet, at least, deserves to live, as one of the torch-bearers of our most cherished liberties. His vast learning, his untiring labours, his courage even unto death, deserve a place in the annals of the sixteenth century equal to many a long-sounding name, handed down to us from the wars of the Titans that filled those memorable years. But the man was not " born under a happy star."

Of his wife and child we hear no more, although the boy should have had a bright future in the world of letters. Probably, the woman's heart was crushed, the young existence doomed to obscure safety in some unknown corner of the land. There was no inheritance for the widow and the fatherless, despoiled of all by the men in authority, in the dishonoured name of God.

Darker and darker fell the course of the days above their heads in France. The king died, and his unnatural son Henry II. entered on his inheritance, rejoicing. Diane, Duchesse de

Valentinois, his father's leman and his own, received the profits of all goods confiscated from condemned heretics. Needs it to say, the fires were often lit in the market-places of Paris for human sacrifice, with the king and his fair minion to grace the show. Sometimes the pair would even deign to enter into controversy with the men appointed to die. One martyr replied to the shameless woman: "Madame, defile the throne of France with your foulness, if you will, but touch not the things of God."

The next year after Dolet's death, the Council of Trent began its meetings, and evolved, by some merciful thought, the doctrine of "Invincible Ignorance." This was a way of escape from everlasting damnation for those who might err on points of doctrine without *malice prepense*, misled only through the wanderings of the intellect to which our mortal nature is so prone. Our latter-day Christianity accepts this charitable faith in the All-Father's power to make good his children's default. But in those times of cruelty and blood, the teachings of mercy found no practical application in the dealings of man with man. The Church of Rome, by the right of the strong, erred most against the common light of nature; but the Reformed creed shared in her reproach. Servetus was burned alive at Geneva on a charge of "Atheism," which may be interpreted disrespect towards the local, self-constituted infallible Pope, Calvin, and denial of the favourite doctrines promulgated by that Holy Father of an unquestioning flock.

Servetus, judged by his works, appears to have been a self-contradictory theologian, inclining to the heterodox side of the great Arian controversy on the "homooisian" *v.* the "homousian" dogma; a difference of an *iota*, for which rivers of blood flowed, in the name of the Prince of Peace. Was it in vain that He came to teach us, that our brothers, made of one flesh with us, are to be reconciled to Himself, not by the fires of persecution, but by the compelling power of His love?

A Novel Collection of Curios.

CHAPTER I.

"YES, I have returned at last. I enjoyed my travels very much. I am having an at-home next Tuesday. I do hope that you and the girls will be able to come, Mrs. Ferrars."

"Thank you, dear Lilian, we shall be charmed to accept. I am so delighted, dear child, that you are going to turn over a new leaf and not shut yourself up as you did before you went abroad; it was so bad for you; living so much alone. Fred and the girls used to miss their old play-fellow sadly. They were so delighted when they heard that you had decided to return at last; it was so dismal seeing the dear old Hall closed as it has been all these years. You were a great loss to us."

"Yes? Now I'm back I must really do my best to brighten up the old place. I am afraid I was not very gay before I left home, but then grandfather was only just dead, and I—I felt so very unhappy. How odd it seems that I have stopped away for more than four years. When I left I intended only to be absent a few months. But time runs away so very fast in travelling, and there was nothing to bring me home. When I began to collect, I travelled about in search of specimens to add to my collection."

"Your collection," echoed Mrs. Ferrars in amazement, "have you turned into a collector, my dear? I never heard a word about it before. You are such a shockingly bad correspondent, Lilian, we really seem to know nothing about you now-a-days."

Lilian said with a smile:

"Oh! dear, that is what everybody is always telling me, but I do so hate pen and ink. I never can think of anything to say when I begin to write a letter, so I never do begin. Please don't scold me about it, even if you think that I deserve it."

"Well, it is very naughty of you, but I won't complain about it now. Tell me about your collection. What is it? Pictures?"

"No ; so many people collect pictures ; I thought, at first, that I would do the same, but as it seems to me all the nice ones have been bought up, and nobody thinks anything of modern ones as a collection, so I made up my mind that to collect pictures would be dull, and china and glass the same. Old silver is very nice, but then there is so much imitation now-a-days, that unless one understands a lot about it one is sure to be taken in. So, at last, I thought that I would start a collection of something that nobody had ever thought of before, and so become the founder of a new school of collectors, the 'Lilian Burgoyne School,' that will sound splendid !" and Lilian ceased speaking, and mused over her future greatness.

Mrs. Ferrars broke into her dreams by saying : "But, my dear Lilian, what is it you collect ? It cannot be autographs, so many collect them, or jewellery ? Is it lace ?" asked Mrs. Ferrars eagerly. "I am so fond of lace myself, and my sister, Lady Tenby, has the most magnificent lace that you ever saw. Of course, I cannot afford to buy much, a rector's wife never has cash enough to spare for buying such luxuries. But I know a very great deal about it and can tell what is good and what is worthless better than a great many people who fancy that they know a lot on the subject. Show me yours and I will tell you all about it, and what its best points are, for you are still far too young to really understand what constitutes the value of rare old lace," for by this time Mrs. Ferrars had quite made up her mind that the future "Lilian Burgoyne collection" consisted of her own favourite vanity, old lace, and Lilian's answer came like a blow.

"But I don't collect lace, Mrs. Ferrars ; I believe there is already a heap of old lace put away somewhere, that the Burgoynes have had for ages ; it is very dirty and yellow, and wants well washing before it could be worn."

"Washing, Lilian !" screamed Mrs. Ferrars in horror. "What are you saying ? You must not have it washed on any account, or if it must be done, send it to someone who really understands it. Let me do it for you. I know some who could do it without harming it at all."

"I won't wash the lace myself, Mrs. Ferrars ; of that you may feel quite sure," said Lilian smiling, much amused by Mrs. Ferrars' horror of her suggestion.

"Nor let your maid do so either, Lillian. If you only knew how often priceless lace has been ruined by being badly washed, you would not think and speak of it in such a light tone. There, I must be going; I see Juliet coming up to the front door, and our pony cannot bear to be kept waiting a minute. Good-bye, dear child, I am delighted to find you looking so well and happy." And Mrs. Ferrars rose from her arm-chair looking out of the window and keeping a watchful eye on the cart in which her daughter sat, holding the pretty spirited pony that was tossing its head about.

"Must you go?" said Lillian rising also. "You've not made a very long stay—I hoped that you would stop for luncheon. May I not ring and tell them to take the pony round to the stables? Do let me!"

"No, please do not, my dear; I must really be off, I have a lot of things to do this morning, several outlying cottages to visit, so I ought to hurry. Good-bye, Lillian; come down any day you care to, to lunch with us. Juliet and Margaret are both at home. Come and speak to Juliet."

Lillian followed Mrs. Ferrars to the hall door and went out to speak to Juliet.

"How are you?" said that young lady. "So glad you're back at last. Make haste, mother; Folly will not stand much longer, he's awfully fresh to-day. Come down soon and see us, Lillian. Mind you come and tell us all about your travels" And mother and daughter were whirled away, Mrs. Ferrars turning to kiss her hand to Lillian.

The Hall was a charming old house and Lillian was the possessor of it, with many broad acres as well; and, better still, plenty of hard cash, money in the funds, not in land. With all these advantages then, Lillian was a young person much sought after. Mrs. Ferrars was a lady who thought it wrong to throw away any chance of securing a rich daughter or son-in-law. True, as yet she had not met with much success, for her only married child was a girl who had preferred a love match with her father's curate to the one with the rich, elderly man intended for her by her mother. Here indeed was a chance of a charming, rich, daughter-in-law—a girl of good old family, and one that Mrs. Ferrars felt she could be fond of. When Lillian Burgoyne had left England shortly after her grandfather's death

Fred Ferrars was too young to be thought of in connection with marrying, not much more than twenty, about the same age as Lilian's, and a very boyish fellow. Lilian had seemed so much the elder that a marriage between them had never entered Mrs. Ferrars' head. Now that both were twenty-five they appeared to have changed places and Lilian appeared quite girlish and Fred was a man out in the world.

"Fred will be constantly seeing her. He will be first in the field, that is always something," thought Mrs. Ferrars; then a remembrance crossed her mind with a pang. "But will he be the first? There was that affair before her grandfather's death; it is now all over I hope. I never knew who he was, his name did not transpire; then too there are those years abroad; well, I must do my best for Fred."

As Lilian stood in the porchway of the old Hall she made a charming picture in the bright April sunshine. She was most becomingly dressed and her clothes had a smart Parisian air unusual in little country villages. Besides being well-dressed Lilian had been kindly treated by Nature, who had given her a tall, slight figure and a pretty face, with lovely grey eyes, and curly brown-gold hair, arranged by a first-class maid; so there was much to make her a happy person, for if you are young, healthy, rich and pretty, there is not much lacking to make the world a pleasant place.

Perhaps some people might have thought Lilian's life a lonely one, for she had no family, few relations and did not make many friends. For conventionality's sake she had a lady companion, but Lilian never made a friend of her, and in truth saw as little of her as was possible; the lady companion was allowed to go her own way unquestioned, and Lilian calmly went hers. "I hate having a woman always following me about, but everyone is always saying that I should be wrong to go about without one, so I put up with the nuisance," Lilian often explained to new acquaintances, and she generally added, "besides, I make her useful, she helps to pack the collection and enter the new additions in my book."

As she stood in the porch she looked out over the lawn to where the cows were feeding close up to the fence which divided show it from the lovely park. The fine old trees were beginning to great green buds, for it was an early spring and well on in April.

It was very nice, Lilian thought, to be once more in her own house. "England is far pleasanter than any foreign country ; I'm glad I'm back again. How lovely it is out to-day, the garden is just heavenly ; how I wish I could get out, but I ought to go and arrange the collection. Fancy Mrs. Ferrars thinking I had been collecting lace. She'll be a little amazed she when sees what the collection really is. I ought to get it arranged nicely and then show it off to everybody on Tuesday. I am so glad I did not tell Mrs. Ferrars anything about it, for it can now be displayed as a great surprise, and I'll give a lecture to explain it all. It will be great fun. I ought to go and find Mrs. Milton and set her to work. I should so like to be out this morning, but if the collection is to be arranged for next Tuesday, I ought to go and see after it. What a bother it is that Mrs. Ferrars kept me such ages ; people never ought to come calling in the morning, it quite spoils the day's work—I don't feel a bit inclined to settle to anything now ; well, I'll go in now and hunt up Mrs. Milton and set her to work at any rate."

She turned reluctantly from the sunlight and disappeared into the dark hall. She ran down a passage and opened a door and came into a charming room, rather low, lighted by two windows with deep old-fashioned seats with cushions to make them comfortable. There was a glass door at one end leading into the garden—Lilian crossed over and seated herself in one of the windows and gazed out. The garden was gay with tulips, hyacinths and sweet-smelling brown wallflowers ; Lilian flung the window open and leaning out of it, sniffed the fragrance of the flowers.

The elderly lady seated at the table paused in her writing and sighed softly to herself. Mrs. Milton was a chilly mortal and loved to sit with closed windows and a large fire on the warmest of spring days ; but this was an enjoyment she could seldom have, as Lilian had the modern mania for fresh air highly developed, and her rooms were often a perfect whirlwind. She did not content herself with opening only one of the windows but she rose from her seat and walked to the second and flung it up. A pause while she leaned out of it for a moment, then she went to the glass door and threw it open so that the soft, fresh spring air came in, blowing about the papers on the table. Mrs. Milton's hand moved slowly during these operations ; sighing

mournfully, she clutched at the fluttering papers; she said nothing, but continued to write, giving an occasional shiver by way of protest.

"Oh, how horribly close and stuffy it is in here, and it is so lovely out of doors—how can you bear it, I wonder?" exclaimed Lilian. "You would have been stifled in another moment if I had not come to the rescue, Mrs. Milton."

Mrs. Milton wished fervently that Miss Burgoyne had left her to be stifled in peace, but said nothing of the kind, merely smiling with the air of a resigned martyr, waiting to hear what Lilian had come about.

"I came to ask you to come and help me in arranging the collection, there's a lot to do to get it ready by Tuesday."

"I am writing the cards for Tuesday now, Miss Burgoyne. You will remember perhaps, that you desired me to get them written and sent off to-day, so that if I do not finish them soon I cannot carry out your desires."

Mrs. Milton showed no eagerness to leave her work and assist in arranging Lilian's collection. One would have thought that it would be pleasanter to be arranging treasures of art than writing cards of invitation to view them; but this did not commend itself to Mrs. Milton.

"Oh, never mind, some can go to-morrow. The collection must be unpacked. I shall have it in the library and shall arrange it in rows on some of the shelves, so we must clear the books out of the way. Let me look at the cards," and she came to the table and looking over Mrs. Milton's shoulder exclaimed: "Why, what have you been writing? 'From 3.30 to 6.30,' I told you 'From 9 till 12.'"

"Pardon me, Miss Burgoyne, for contradicting you, but you told me 'from half-past three till six,' just as I have put it, and to prove that it was so, here is the paper where you wrote down your instructions," and Mrs. Milton handed her a paper with an air of prim satisfaction, watching Lilian as she took and slowly read it.

"How very odd; so sorry I made such a mistake, Mrs. Milton, but I meant nine all the time. I wonder why I put 3.30. You could alter it to nine easily, could you not, Mrs. Milton?—or if you could not, I could myself."

"I think any alterations you may desire to have made had

better be left to me. They will be cleaner and neater, I fancy if I do them, than if I entrusted them to you. But I am keeping you, Miss Burgoyne; you wished me to come and help you to arrange your collection."

She rose from her chair and prepared to follow Lilian to the library, first pausing to collect the scattered papers and place them together with a book on them so as to keep them from being blown away "when we open the door."

While she had thus busied herself Lilian had stepped out into the garden through the open glass door and hearing Mrs. Milton's voice, returned and said :

"Do you know I have changed my mind. I shall arrange the collection this evening, I am going out now. You want to finish your writing, don't you? I shall take the dogs for a run. Would you please tell Groves to send round to the stables and let my groom know that I shall want my horse at three—no two—no half-past two o'clock this afternoon. Please don't forget or make a mistake—two o'clock," and she ran out of the room.

"Now what time did she really mean?" wondered Mrs. Milton. "She is so confusing, I never understand what she does want. First she said three, then two, then half-past two, then two once more. I shall say half-past two to Groves, it will be best," and poor puzzled Mrs. Milton rose to ring and give the order. "Groves, Miss Burgoyne wishes for her horse and groom at half-past two this afternoon."

"I have just met Miss Burgoyne, ma'am, and she ordered me to say she would ride at half-past three. Had I not better leave it so?"

"Oh yes! indeed! you had better attend to Miss Burgoyne's own orders. That was all I wanted to say. Oh! Groves, please shut that glass door and—yes, both the windows. Thank you, that is all. Now I shall be warm once more."

CHAPTER II.

TUESDAY evening had arrived; all had been prepared so as to cause wonder and make a sensation among the country neighbours. Lilian had left most of the arrangements to Mrs. Milton. Now she professed herself very well satisfied with that lady's work. She had spent a good deal of her time at

the Rectory. Fred had returned home for a few days and the two had appeared to be as fond of one another as in former days, so that Mrs. Ferrars felt quite justified in hoping that before many weeks were past Fred would give her the daughter she had set her heart on. Indeed Lilian was showing him plenty of encouragement. He was asked to the Hall to give his assistance in helping to arrange the collection, Lilian first making him promise to keep what it was a secret from his family and all the world. So Mrs. Ferrars failed to get any information out of her son wherewith to satisfy the curiosity as to Lilian's collection.

Mrs. Milton, who was unmoved by all her coaxing, merely said, "I can tell you nothing about the matter. I promised Miss Burgoyne. She wishes the evening to be a surprise. It may be foolish of her but my lips are sealed. I gave her my word that I would say nothing to anyone who might enquire of me about her collection."

When questioned by his mother Fred had laughed heartily, remarking "It will make every one sit up. Lil is such a queer girl, but I like her though all the same."

"Of course you do, my dear boy, and so do we all. I hope sincerely that her evening will be a success. I am expecting to enjoy it very much," and she kissed him fondly.

"So am I, it will be rare fun to hear Lilian lecture. I expect it will be the happiest evening of my life."

And Mrs. Ferrars had hoped great things from the tender tone in her usually unsentimental son's voice.

Lilian had spent from Friday till Monday morning with a friend of hers, Mrs. Aubrey, who lived about ten miles from the Hall. She had returned on Monday looking very well and happy. Fred also had spent most of the day there and had gone in the evening to dine with "Lil" as he called his friend. She had brought two girls back with her, Ethel and May Leslie. Fred did not tell his mother much about them, all he had said was that they were very nice girls and were Mrs. Aubrey's younger sisters. He had known them before. Yes, Lilian seemed very fond of them both, fonder than she was of Juliet or Margaret. Mrs. Ferrars would see what they were like for herself to-morrow night. He was quite sure she would like them, they were both very pretty, indeed Miss Ethel was a beauty. Mrs. Aubrey and her brother Captain Leslie were

coming over in the evening to take part in the performance ; at least Captain Leslie would come, he believed.

"I should not have thought dear Lilian would want anyone else to help her, as she has you," said Mrs. Ferrars coldly, for the intimacy of a strange man with Lilian did not at all please the lady ; Fred and Lilian were not actually engaged, and till their engagement was announced it would be better that Lilian should see as few strange men as was possible. They must be engaged soon now, Mrs. Ferrars felt quite sure ; "what a happy marriage it will be ; Lilian and Fred are just made for one another."

As has been before said Tuesday evening arrived and dinner was over at the Rectory. Juliet and Margaret were seated together in the drawing-room waiting for their father and mother. They were talking in low voices and seemed rather excited.

"Well I must say I do think Fred has been a bit of a fool ; he might have given mother a hint before now. I've half a mind to do it myself Ju, it will be such an unexpected blow to her. Dad knows I'm sure ; it seems so cruel letting her go on deceiving herself as she is now doing."

"Don't meddle, Madge. Let Fred muddle his affairs in his own fashion. Mother can't mind much, after all, when you come to think of it. And is it likely Lilian would look at Fred ?"

"Why not ? She might just as well have fallen in love with him as anyone else. He is a dear old boy," said Madge, with sisterly pride and partiality. "There is not much in Lilian, it is only her being an heiress that makes people think her attractive, I take it—I never can get on with her a bit—I've nothing on earth to say to her. A girl who collects, and is by way of being clever—she isn't clever really. I saw the other day when father was talking to her she couldn't follow his argument or understand a word of what he was saying. She is *not* clever ; clever people are good all round and understand something on all subjects, and Lilian is very far off that, I'm sure. She may understand art, though I doubt her doing so, as I heard her say the other day that Rubens painted lovely landscapes and that his heads of children were quite perfect. That does not sound much like Rubens, does it ?" Margaret summed up triumphantly this long list of accusations against Miss Burgoyne.

Juliet replied more temperately : " No, it doesn't sound like the utterance of one who knew much about pictures and art, but she is going to lecture on it to-night ; it's brave of her, and let us hope she has studied her subject well and will not talk of Rubens as a landscape painter again. The Leslies will be there. I wonder how we shall like them ; they dress very well Fred says. Do you think our dresses are nice, and will do ? you look awfully well ; how I wish I were fair. May Leslie has a lovely complexion and golden hair, I do envy her. There, that is the carriage. I wonder if mother is ready yet ; you go and give her a call, Madge, and I'll look up dad."

And both girls left the room, casting looks at themselves in the looking-glass over their shoulders as they went.

Fred was dining at the Hall, much to Mrs. Ferrars' satisfaction. " I expect I shall hear some news to-night, shan't I, Fred dear ? " she had said to him as she watched him start off for the Hall.

" I think you will, though I'm not sure if you'll be pleased, mother," said Fred in a hesitating voice.

" Yes, I shall be delighted I am sure, my own dear boy. Give my love to Lilian."

Fred only nodded in answer, and hurried off to the Hall, saying that he would be late for dinner.

During the drive from the Rectory to the Hall Mrs. Ferrars passed the time in picturing the future happiness of Fred and Lilian, and how nice it would be having Fred living so close. " If Fred were to marry anyone but Lilian he would have to settle in London, now I shall have the dear boy close to me. The Burgoyne lace is very fine, I must make Lilian be married in a dress covered with it ; old family lace will read very well in a description of the bride's dress by the fashion papers."

Her family listened to her remarks in silence. They were glad when the hall door was at length reached, and they got out of the string of carriages waiting to deposit their occupants on the hall steps.

" What a blow it will be when it falls," whispered Margaret to her sister. " She's so unconscious of what is coming, I quite shudder to think of the drive back. What will she say ? Poor Fred ! Poor May ! "

" Hush, hush ! " said Juliet, " she'll hear you."

The girls were following their mother to the cloak-room, and

found it full of their friends, so they separated and talked with their neighbours and acquaintances. "So glad to see you back, Juliet, you've been away ages." . . . "Yes, I've been staying away myself for a long time with friends in Ireland," etc., the usual chit-chat of society.

They descended to the drawing-room, which was a mass of lovely hot-house flowers. Lilian was standing by the door receiving her guests. Was this lovely creature really Lilian? Lilian, whom the Rectory girls had been criticising so severely that evening, saying she owed all her attractions to her heiress-ship. How charming she looked, and how simple was her dress, only white satin! Thick, rich white satin though, with a little lace on the body and round the hem of the skirt; it looked such a quiet, inexpensive robe; but looks are sometimes deceitful. This Lilian had a lovely colour tinting her cheeks, and a look of radiant happiness in her eyes. Close behind her stood Fred, buttoning the gloves of a pretty golden-haired girl dressed in pale blue. Beside her, a tall, good-looking young man was standing talking to a very tall, extremely beautiful young woman. The man was holding Lilian's fan, and was slowly opening and shutting it.

"You will break Lil's lovely fan if you are not careful, Jack," said the tall girl with a little laugh. "What would she say to you then?"

"She'd like it if I did it," said Jack with a proud look at Lilian. "Here come some more people. Poor little Lil, how tired she must be getting of them all. Oh! I say, Ethel, these are the Rectory people at last. Look nice girls, don't they? Look here, Ethel, you must be awfully nice to them, and fascinate them all for May's sake. People always fall down and worship you if you choose to make them do so. Fred is a good fellow and will make May quite happy."

"I'll do my best, Jack; but I'm rather afraid, from the way the old lady is greeting Lil, that she has not guessed your secret or Fred's either, and thinks that he is to be Lilian's future husband."

"Miss Leslie, I am delighted to find you here to-night, this is a piece of good luck. Jack, old fellow, you look very beaming; the world's going very well with you, I take it."

"Jack may well look happy—Lilian Burgoyne has promised

to marry him, and you know he has loved her for years. We are all so pleased about it, Sir Henry."

"Well, he is a lucky fellow, but he deserves her. I congratulate you heartily, old boy, she is a charming young lady. Come and tell me all about it, Miss Leslie," said Sir Henry Austen, pleadingly, offering his arm to her.

Miss Leslie smiled and remarked softly: "Not just at present, Sir Henry. I'm helping Lilian to receive the guests. Wait till the lecture begins. I shan't be sorry of an excuse to miss it. I'm afraid I don't appreciate Lilian's collection properly, and I doubt her eloquence. She is a dear girl, only she is rather silly sometimes."

"Like most women," said Sir Henry, with a short laugh. "Come when you please, so long as you do come."

Miss Leslie again smiled. "You are more patient than you used to be," she remarked.

"Found the other way did not pay, don't you know," said Sir Henry, taking up his stand beside her.

Ethel laughed and looked at him for a moment, then turned from him to talk to Mrs. Ferrars, who all this time had been holding Lilian's hand and, so to speak, taking entire possession of her, much to her annoyance and confusion. Lilian turned eagerly to her friend for assistance.

"I must go now, Mrs. Ferrars. Ethel, will you come with me to the library and help me to prepare for the lecture? Jack promised me that he would not be present. How I wish it were over!" she whispered to Ethel, as they prepared to walk away, and leaving Mrs. Ferrars behind. "Do you know where Fred is, Ethel? He said he would help me, and I do feel so awfully nervous."

"Poor dear Lilian," says the Rector's wife, who has followed them, not seeing that Lilian wished to get rid of her. "Trust it all to Fred, he will pull you through. He is a capital fellow at this kind of thing. Who is the pretty little girl dressed in blue speaking to the Rector? the girl standing in front of Fred. Who is she, Lilian, I have never seen her before?"

"That is my sister, Mrs. Ferrars," said Ethel, "she is a pretty girl, is she not? I do hope you will like her, and be kind to her. See, the Rector is bringing her up to introduce to you. She is so very young still that you will think her shy, but no

one who knows her well can help loving her. We must go," and Ethel slipped her arm through Lilian's and walked off with her to the library.

"Lilian, how pale you are, don't be a goose, and break down at the last moment. It will all be over soon. Cheer up."

Lilian gave a sickly smile for answer. They have some time yet before the crowd comes, in which to arrange the treasured collection.

The beautiful old library is lighted brilliantly by wax candles. Several of the oak shelves have been emptied of their ancient volumes, to make way for the treasures that till lately Lilian had prized so dearly. To-night, the collection appears to have lost all its value to her, for she said: "I should like to break the whole lot of them, I do feel such an arrant fool. Do you know, Ethel, I never realised how silly I was till Jack went into a fit of laughter when I showed him the collection this morning just before lunch. He was awfully nice about it, he always is nice even when he laughs at you, and said the idea was original and quaint; but he roared with laughter, and offered to send all the old medicine bottles he could get hold of to swell the collection. Silly old fellow!" Then, suddenly recalling her present fix, "Oh dear! oh dear! what shall I do?" and the depressed collector sat down in a chair with a very melancholy air. And well she might feel a little foolish, for in truth her much talked-of collection was nothing but a lot of old medicine-bottles, supposed by her to have belonged to all the great people of the present day, both English and foreign, and treasured as such. Yes, they looked so extremely comic, that Ethel, viewing them, broke into peals of laughter.

There they stood on the shelves in rows, in all their native ugliness. Beneath their labels was written the name of the great person cured by their contents; when the inscription on the label was in a foreign tongue it had been translated and stuck on below for the aid of the British public.

"I used to be proud of them, and believed in them till lately now I hate the horrid things. Every one here to-night will think me mad to have spent my time and money in collecting such trash. Ethel, tell me what to do, I daren't read the lecture I had prepared, it is such nonsense. Think of something to save me from being laughed at by everybody." And Lilian

crossed over to Ethel's side and knelt down by the chair she was sitting in.

Ethel thought for a moment, then she said slowly, for she felt sorry for her future sister-in-law, and did not wish to see her making a fool of herself, "Turn it into a joke, Lilian, and make the lecture a skit on the follies people collect now-a-days, and believe to be beautiful just because they are old."

"Yes, that is a brilliant idea," said Lilian eagerly "but am I clever enough to make it funny and amusing? Tell me what to say, Ethel."

So the two girls consulted together, Lilian thankfully receiving any advice offered by her cleverer friend. Then they mapped out the lecture on an entirely new ground to the former one, which had been written by Lilian in the earnest spirit of the founder of the new school to be known in future days as the "Lilian Burgoyne School." By Ethel's advice the lecture was no longer to be earnest, it was to be distinctly flippant.

"Laugh at your old bottles as much as possible, Lil. Now I'm going to find Jack, for he'll be just the person to help you ever so much better than Fred, and it will serve to announce the coming wedding if he is seen assisting you to-night. Lots of people seem to expect you will marry Fred Ferrars. That old Mrs. Ferrars has been busy lately spreading the rumour as far as possible, and quite looks on you as her future daughter."

"Silly old thing to think that I would ever marry Fred. Why, I should have been Jack's wife years ago if he hadn't been so silly and proud and taken such bitter offence at what poor grandfather said once, when he was angry, about never consenting to let me marry a beggarly soldier, who only wanted me for my money. I knew that Jack loved me and never thought whether I was rich or poor. I believed in him, so he might have trusted me instead of making me miserable for years."

"Well," said Ethel soothingly, "all has come right between you now. Jack sees what a fool he was to leave you as he did for an old man's angry word, and bury himself in India. Now you will marry and be happy ever after, if such a state of things is possible."

Lilian gave a pallid smile. "Yes, but there is this evening first. I hope Jack will not twit me with it afterwards; I won't marry him if he does."

"It will all go off capitally, you'll see. People will never guess that you ever intended it for anything but a joke. You see you've kept it so delightfully dark all this time that they will think you wanted to laugh at them all along. Jack will help you better than I can, so I'll go and find him and send him to you. Mind you raise plenty of laughter. I must go, for I ought to be seeing after May. I greatly fear that Mrs. Ferrars will not give her a very loving welcome, and she may have hurt the poor child's feelings, so I had better go and see after her." Kissing her hand to Lilian, she left the room and went off to find her brother.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Ethel ushered the guests to the library she found that Jack, with the help of Lilian, Sir Henry Austen and Mrs. Milton, had quite changed the appearance of the room. Eastern looking shawls, tableclothes and scarves, were hung in front of the shelves and hid the greater part of the bottles. Some of the tables had been pulled behind the curtains of the large bow-windows, and so were concealed with all their contents. One table alone had been left, and over this a crêpe shawl had been lightly thrown. By this table Lilian had taken up her stand, and close behind her stood Jack ready to give assistance. It was obvious to all beholders that Jack looked on the lecture as a good joke. On the contrary, poor Lilian had by no means recovered confidence in herself, and fully expected to end the evening by appearing in the eyes of all a harmless idiot.

While they had been arranging the room, Jack had suggested so many things for her to say, that he had ended by confusing his unfortunate *fiancée* completely. Her brain felt dizzy, and she could think of nothing better wherewith to commence her remarks, than: "You all see these bottles, well, they are my collection. They are old medicine bottles, and here also are some pill-boxes. I hope you like them and are amused by seeing them. I don't in the least suppose that you—you may examine them, and read the different names on them, if you care to do so. I believe them all to be genuine."

That somehow did not seem to do; everyone was seated, she ought to commence—Fred and May were conspicuous by their

absence. Fred, oblivious to all the world but May, had entirely forgotten that he had promised Lilian to act as assistant showman, and was seated in the morning-room, trying to make May believe that his mother was delighted at the prospect of shortly welcoming her as her daughter-in-law, which poor Fred found was a difficult task. Mrs. Ferrars' reception of the young lady had not been a loving or gracious one. The blow of finding that Lilian was engaged and not to her son, had been quite too much for her temper—moreover, to make things worse, she had been going about the room just before the thunderbolt fell, hinting broadly that she expected dear Lilian as a daughter at no very distant date. And then to have a silly little girl like May Leslie palmed off on her!—fate seemed to be mocking her. So one of Lilian's audience was in just the frame of mind to be ready to triumph over her fall if such a disaster should take place.

The audience were seated, and waited in silence for the promised lecture. Jack very thoughtfully poured out a tumbler of water and placed it close to Lilian's hand, then, seeing that she was really completely stage-struck and utterly incapable of speech, he stepped forward and, to give her time to regain her wits, said: "Ladies and gentlemen, Miss Burgoyne has had the great kindness to invite us here to view her *magnificent* and *unrivalled* collection. She believes *it* to be *unique*, and is proud to think that in all Europe, and probably in all the World, there is not such another. The idea of collecting the specimens which Miss Burgoyne intends to show you to-night, was entirely her own. It will strike all present, I think, as curious that in these enlightened days of collectors, that it should never before have suggested itself to mortal brain to gather together similar specimens of the *clever*, the *great*, and the *good*. Miss Burgoyne has been the first to make a beginning, and to her shall be accounted the glory of having laid the foundation stone of a new school of *collectors*. Her object in showing her collection is, I believe, a hope that by drawing others to her as followers and disciples, she may enlarge the chances of getting specimens from all parts of the world. At present Miss Burgoyne has had to confine herself mainly to Europe and America. You will all agree that for an unassisted woman, Miss Burgoyne has done great things and deserves to have her name handed down to

posterity as a benefactress to mankind, in fact she fully deserves to have her name in connection with the great collection. But I am sure you are all getting impatient to see what Miss Burgoyne has to show you, so I will raise the curtain and withdraw myself, leaving to her who alone understands the subject the pleasant task of introducing to you these hitherto unvalued objects of art."

Jack turned to the table, whispering to Lilian, "Don't be nervous, darling, talk any nonsense you choose, the wilder the better." As he spoke he raised the shawl covering the table—there was a general craning forward and some laughter, for evidently, from the opening speech, "Lilian's collection would be something in the comic line."

There was a murmur of voices as the table's contents were exhibited to view. "What is it?" "I can't see properly." "What are they?" "Look like medicine bottles. Oh! dear, how shocking! pill-boxes too." "'Pon my word, I believe Miss Burgoyne has hoaxed us all." There was a hubbub of sound, mixed laughter and astonished exclamations. "Really, how droll!" So clever of her to think of such a thing." "Capital joke. Old medicine-bottles!"

As Lilian stretched out her hand and raised a bottle slowly from the table and advanced to the audience and held it turned so that the label might be seen by those nearest, the noise burst into a roar of laughter from the assembled multitude, and Lilian felt thankful that the serious lecture she had intended to give was changed by Jack and Ethel to a mock one. "I should have been justly shut up in a lunatic asylum," she thought with a shudder, "had I talked all the bosh I had intended to talk to these people." The bottle she held in her hand was labelled in her writing "Mr. Gladstone." Jack had picked it out for her to commence with, feeling sure that it would excite plenty of interest. As she stood waiting for the noise and laughter to subside she lost all fear and determined to do her best to make her evening a success.

A few of the audience who had come in a serious spirit to greet a new follower to be enrolled in their ranks, felt that they had been badly treated and that their noble pursuit was being ridiculed. These people—and they were very few—kept asking solemnly, "Most strange, very odd and clever of Miss Burgoyne

of course. But where is the Beautiful? In a bottle beauty is entirely lacking." But these were the minority, the majority thoroughly appreciated the joke and clapped and laughed with the utmost good-nature.

"May I say a few words to explain to you this extraordinary array of bottles?" began Lilian. "You will all observe that on this table is nothing but medicine-bottles and pill-boxes. I have always longed to possess something that was owned by all the great men and women of the present day. Something that all possess in common. At first I thought I would form my collection of old gloves, but this I discarded, knowing that many people object to wearing gloves, and therefore I might not be able to procure a pair as specimens of certain great people I wished to have among my collection. Then something put it into my mind that it is human nature to be ill and to take medicine therefore I had better collect the bottles from which the great of this world had drunk their physic. How much I should have liked to have had specimens of the bottles of the Ancients! How proud I should have been to own a bottle from which David, Solomon, Cæsar, Mark Anthony or Cleopatra had partaken. But this I knew to be a fruitless ambition, and I turned all my attention to the great of the present day, leaving the past alone. No; that was a dream too beautiful to be realized. So I travelled and daily added to my collection specimens both foreign and English. Here, the specimen I hold in my hand bears the name of one of the greatest men of the present day. I shall say nothing about him as I do not wish to introduce personalities into my words to-night, for that I feel would be in bad taste; for all have their different admirers. I, for my part, admire all who are represented among my bottles and feel pleased and proud to possess something that was once theirs, and that I sincerely hope gave them relief when they were ill, and soothed their pain. How I became possessed of them, I cannot divulge. A few were given to me, but of most the former owners are quite unaware that I possess anything of theirs. Here," and Lilian stepped back to the table and picked out a particular bottle, "here is a bottle that all present to-night; I know, will feel grateful and be delighted to behold. This once contained a draught that gave health to our good and great Queen. It was difficult to obtain, and I need not say is one of

my most prized treasures. Should any care to examine the collection they are begged to do so at their leisure. Here, on these shelves behind me, are arranged the best specimens. You will find them ticketed and all have their original labels, for in my eyes the bottle without its label is valueless. I wish to add that any of my audience who consider that they are among the great people of the present day (and I need not say that in my eyes all are so), are heartily requested to forward specimens to be placed in the Lilian Burgoyne Collection. If the examination of the collection does not afford amusement to all, I beg to say that I have had the hall cleared for dancing."

With a bow, Lilian stepped back and, with Jack's assistance, removed the shawls which obscured the contents of the shelves.

The audience began to clap heartily, save the discontented few, who remained seated gazing at the shelves with a petrified stare, and hoping that the supper would be a good one to repay them for the pains from which they were now suffering.

The whole lecture had been a decided annoyance to Mrs. Ferrars. To be expected to laugh when she was feeling very cross was more than she could bear. "I shall not stay late, Juliet," she said. "If you want to dance you can do so, your father will take me home early; you girls must come back with Fred. I'm tired, my head aches, and the evening is very dull. How Lilian could have dared to make such an exhibition of herself I cannot imagine. I am glad she is no child of mine!" And Mrs. Ferrars appeared to have forgotten; as she uttered this tirade, that the cause of her ill-temper was that Lilian had not chosen to be her daughter.

Juliet merely assented to her mother's suggestions and hastily left her to her reflections, joining the crowd that was now surrounding the table, at which Lilian was standing, receiving the laughing congratulations of her friends.

"Some one ought to make a speech of thanks to you, Miss Lilian," said one old gentleman, "and, as no one else seems moved thereto, I will do so myself. Silence! I shall, I am sure, ladies and gentlemen, be expressing the sentiments of all here present when I say that we all heartily thank Miss Lilian Burgoyne for the pleasant entertainment which she has taken so much trouble to get up for our benefit. I may say that we all appreciate the fun, and congratulate her and her able assistant,

Captain Leslie, on their success, wishing them much happiness and a long life together, in which to add more specimens of great people to the Lilian Burgoyne Collection, after its owner is transformed into Lilian Leslie, for this she has just informed me is shortly to happen. We can but think Captain Leslie a lucky fellow to have won so charming a bride, though I, who have known him for a very long time, have no doubt that he is well worthy of being allowed to share this rare and splendid collection of curios with my dear young friend, Lilian. I shall bestow as my wedding gift to the young couple one of my old medicine bottles, and to make it more valuable shall write my autograph upon it, so that Lilian will be able to hand down to posterity something of a really good and great man of the present day. Lilian! I claim the right, as your grandfather's oldest friend, of giving away the bride at the coming wedding."

At the conclusion of his speech old Lord Meredith turned and kissed poor blushing Lilian, whose hand he had held while he was speaking. There was plenty of clappings of hands, and Lilian had rather a bad time of being kissed and wished joy by old family friends. She felt a little bewildered, and was rather annoyed that Lord Meredith had announced her engagement so publicly, when she was unable to escape the burst of congratulations which were poured upon her from all sides.

Ethel, on the other hand, was highly contented with the way the evening was going off.

"You did it splendidly, dearest," she said. "Jack did look so proud of you while you were speaking, he quite beamed. I am glad the dear boy is going to be made happy at last, he has loved you long and faithfully. I mean to thank that nice old Lord Meredith for what he said about Jack, and then I am going to sit in the conservatory and talk to Sir Henry Austen. Shall you like him for your brother, Lilian? Jack will, he has often said to me that Sir Henry is the best fellow in the world. And I think so too."

Lilian's congratulations were very hearty. "My dear Ethel, how delightful! I do like Sir Henry very much, and if Jack thinks he is worthy of having you for his wife, he must be a perfect saint," and, in her excitement at Ethel's news, she fell backwards, and in saving herself clutched at the table and tilted it up,

thereby sweeping several of the most prized of the curios to the floor, where they broke with a crash. The Queen, the Czar of Russia, Bismark, Gladstone and others, lay in a shattered heap on the ground.

In the distance there could be heard the sound of a waltz and, scarcely noticing the damage she had done, Lilian hurried away with Jack to join the throng of dancers. Yes, there the fragments lay in mute reproach, unheeded by their owner. All her interest in them had vanished for evermore and their place was occupied by Jack and the things he liked and cared for; Lilian's days as a collector of curios have passed away never to return. Jack has a devoted wife, who believes that her husband is the cleverest and the best man on earth.

It should be added that in a short time Mrs. Ferrars got over her disappointment, and now remarks that she is indeed glad that Lilian married Captain Leslie and not her boy, for she never could have loved her as a daughter.

"Sweet little May is quite like one of my own children, and is such a pretty, loving creature, that we all feel that she is just the right wife for our dear Fred."

KATHERINE MAY.

Only a Prescription.

"If sorrow has taught me anything,
It has taught me to weep for you."

—OWEN MEREDITH.

HE was not my medical attendant, he was not even a friend. On the first day we met, and as we sat side by side in the Kensington Museum he scrawled it on the yellowing paper which lies before me.

At that time I was very young, scarcely more than a child, but no one would have guessed it; my pale, attenuated face was lined with grief, and the eyes, which but a few months ago had been likened to velvet, had almost disappeared behind their swollen and discoloured lids.

And the reason for the change was a grievous one. I had loved and been beloved again. A stern father had put his veto on all correspondence—he had forbidden us even to hope!

Certainly Leslie Blount's prospects were not good; his few years of soldiering had brought only debts and no promotion, and his expectations, such as they were, were shadowy in the extreme. On his departure for India three years back I had been but a child; I was startled therefore when, on his return, he rashly yet passionately declared he had loved me all along! I could not own to loving him in return; I had not learnt what love was, but had a vague, indefinite feeling that it meant what the sunrise does to the flowers—colour, light, expansion!

I hid nothing from my parent, but told him in shy and loving accents of the new experience which had dawned. He was furious; I had never seen him so before. He swore that no penniless infantry subaltern was fit for his daughter, and muttered something about "confounded cheek of the rascally sub. to propose," etcetera, etcetera! I wept and entreated—he ranted and raved, and finally wrote off to Leslie an infuriated command never to darken his doors again.

Then I, heartsore and wretched at this abrupt termination of love's young dream, timidly entreated permission to write one last epistle. My request was granted, but only on condition,

the communication should first be submitted to my enraged parent.

It seemed a terrible ordeal, but I determined to risk it. My dear unlucky lover should at least learn his love was returned and that my constancy should last "till death us do part." This I wrote and more still—pouring out all the feelings of my young awakening heart over four sheets of note-paper, and begging him to work at anything which would bring riches, as dross seemed to be the only "open sesame" to paternal hearts!

With trembling hands I entrusted my first love-letter to my father. It wrung my heart to watch his methodical mode of rubbing his glasses before adjusting them to read the confessions of my love!

I could not face him, but glanced away across the landscape till I imagined he had scanned the whole, and then I turned. Was it possible? Could it be? Did I indeed see a tear trickling down his venerable nose across which his spectacles looked dim and opaque?

I had not intended to be eloquent or even pathetic. I had written only as my soul prompted, and this crude history of my early grief had thus moved him! I rushed into his arms and implored him not to refuse to send the missive.

"I will give it to the impertinent young dog myself," he exclaimed and bolted from the room.

In an hour's time he returned, and I scarcely dared demand a reply.

"He'll bring his own answer," was all he vouchsafed.

What was my astonishment as I dressed for dinner—weeping love-lorn tears the while—to hear Leslie's well-known knock at the door. Down the stairs fled I with winged feet. He might meet my father, words might end in blows, and then——

Terrible thoughts coursed like lightning through my brain. Yet another shock awaited me.

I found my father and Leslie hand-shaking, not formally, but with warmth and effusion, in the hall! In a short time all was explained. On receipt of a furious letter from my irate parent warning him off the premises, Leslie, but just recovered from Indian fever, had taken to his bed with ague. In this state my father had found him when he had called to deliver my letter in person, and there and then had asked him to dinner.

There were, however, conditions attached to the invitation. Leslie might come and dine but once more—just to say “farewell,” but on his honour he must promise never to attempt to see me or write until some more promising change took place in his prospects. Should any stroke of luck bring him a reasonable sum to marry on, *then* he might venture to correspond!

After all, this state of things was preferable to the first, and Leslie parted from me with a heart full of hope, which love made infectious.

Before very long my father received a letter informing him that, having obtained the post of special war correspondent to a daily paper at a salary which seemed to me enormous, Leslie was on the eve of starting for Constantinople. The Russo-Turkish War was the theme in all mouths at the time, and my lover, who had long been panting for activity, had determined to put his military experience to some more practical use than loafing in garrison towns for meagre pay and tardy promotion. My father was extremely pleased with what he called the “smartness of the young rascal” and agreed that at so safe a distance a correspondence might commence.

A new happiness came into my life, and when the travel-stained letters from my literary warrior arrived from the seat of war, full of animation, of anecdotes and sketches, and lastly, of trusting affection, my joy knew no bounds. This added new zest to my education, for I was not yet “finished,” according to the scholastic term—in fact, by comparison with my talented lover I often felt an ignoramus of the most hopeless kind. In details of the war, however, I was quite *au fait*. I daily read every word which came from his brilliant pen, and in this way hoped to improve my acquaintance, not only with life, but with my suitor, of whom, perhaps, but for the opposition of my parent, I might never have thought again. Thus does the heat of paternal ire often expand into blossom the immature shoots of love which might otherwise know no development!

One morning, as usual, I opened the paper and at once commenced reading the columns headed “From Our Special Correspondent.” The account was more exciting than usual—there was a description of Turkish Artillery, of a march under trying circumstances without food or water, and many other adventures, graphically told. I forget them now, for what I next

read effaced the immediate past from my memory for ever! Under the head of "Special Telegrams" was one line :

"Lieut. Blount, our special correspondent, died yesterday of enteric fever."

* * * * *

To a very young person the word death is but a sound—a thing associated with old age or infirmity if considered at all. I had never known anyone who had died, and confess to have been utterly unmindful of such a possibility, when my lover started for the wars. The ominous line therefore conveyed no meaning to me, more especially as, in an adjacent column, the special correspondent's vigorous manhood displayed itself in every word. For all that, the room seemed misty as if enveloped in fog, through which I could not penetrate.

I was seated thus when someone—my father, I think—came in and snatched the paper from my hand. I had read it through, he was welcome to it.

I made no effort to regain it. He smoothed out the sheet several times, but read not a word, for great tears were rolling down his seamed, old face.

Then he opened his arms and took me into them, and whispered many endearing terms, some of which I had not heard since babyhood.

What was the matter? Did he too think Leslie Blount was dead?

I pointed to the brilliantly written columns and smiled.

"That letter was sent by post days and days ago," he said in a broken voice, whose emotion I could scarcely understand. Then a light began to dawn, or was it darkness? Yes, a chaotic blackness that preceded the earthquake which buried all the innocence and hope of my jocund youth in oblivion!

* * * * *

For a whole month I lay occasionally frenzied, occasionally despairing, weeping and praying God would have pity on me, and save my taking up the thread of life again. But my prayers remained unanswered. Then I arose, as we all must, to face the dreary future. I had had no experience of lover's joys in the past, I would have none in the years to come. Art should be my only lover, work my only solace now.

A dreary little figure clad in black, I trudged daily to the South Kensington Schools, and in one month produced better work than others did in six. Then a letter came. It was from the seat of war, written by a Red Cross doctor, who offered to deliver up to me some relics of him who was no more. From the School of Art I wrote "Come," and waited. When the campaign was over, he came.

The corridor was full of girls chatting and giggling and preparing to leave for the luncheon hour. The swing door facing me opened, and an unusual sight presented itself. It was the figure of a man. Such a figure! Hercules come down to earth, all bronzed and glorious from the Eastern sun.

Though there were twenty girls about, he extended a hand to me, with a look of recognition, two honest blue eyes as clear as the sky looked down upon me with a reassuring smile.

I took the hand and followed him out of the building into the Museum beyond.

Then he drew from his breast pocket a small parcel and handed it. I knew what its contents must be. A lock of my hair, some forget-me-nots, and certain photographs of my extreme youth, and another more recent one taken previous to Leslie's departure, in all the pride of my sixteen summers and a long gown! I moved them one by one with listless fingers, scarcely recognizing them.

"One would imagine the sight of these would make me weep," I said, with a dreary smile, "but I cannot—every tear was exhausted long ago!"

"So I see," he replied bluntly. "You must be cautious lest your sight be affected. Drawing all day with weak eyes cannot be conducive to comfort."

It was pathetic to know that the miserable condition of the orbs of which I had hitherto been so proud, was obvious even to a stranger.

"Tell me of him," I murmured, changing the subject.

He did. He gave very few details in a series of jerks, dwelling as little as possible on the saddest feature of it all—the end. I was scarcely conscious of his presence, but was dreaming of that far-away tent, sweltering in the morning sun, with the enemy within a few miles, and death—the greatest enemy of all—staring my lover in the face.

"He died clasping my hand, and thinking of you," he added almost in a whisper, lifting the hand next me with a slight gesture.

On the impulse of the moment, I caught it in both my own and raised it to my lips.

Crimson as a poppy grew his cheeks, he remembered we were in a public place, I had forgotten all but that his hand had touched my lover last! Fortunately our corner of the Museum was deserted.

"Did you know he loved me?" I questioned.

He bowed his head.

"So well, that could I have laid down my life instead of his, that he might return to you, I would have done it."

"How good you are!"

"Not so. I had nothing to live for, and no one to care for me—that is why I lived!" laughed he, rather bitterly.

"You will come and see me often," I implored. "You are the last link between me and him."

"If you wish it," was his curt reply.

"I must return to the class," I exclaimed lingeringly.

"And injure your eyes for ever? Stay," said he, drawing a note from his pocket, from which he tore the spare half-sheet, "I will give you something for them."

He wrote some mystic lines comprehensible but to himself and the chemist. I stuffed them heedlessly in my pocket and returned to work.

Many times after that we met, for my father took a fancy to him, and encouraged his coming. He imagined the doctor's visits cheered me. I scarcely liked to own to myself they did. Looking into his gloriously handsome face, I regretted my pallid shrunken features for the first time.

I began to wish for the looks which had been so promising but a short while back, but they returned not. The glitter had gone from my eyes as the glint of love's gold from my heart. But had it? A red blush of shame overspread my features as I questioned with myself if the memory of the dear dead waxed fainter in the presence of the living.

A year crept slowly by, and I lost the father who had become dearer to me since my grief. Armand Daintry became my only friend. He was more gentle, less abrupt, less bitter than when we first had met.

By instinct rather than anything else, I felt I had brought peace into his life, as he had into mine. Of love I never thought. It was a thing stillborn, buried before the breath of life could come to it. I believed my art was sufficient for me, and knew not it was glorified by the continued presence of one who had become a dear friend, an almost brother. Wherever I went, whatever I did, I felt that the thoughts of one being, like guardian angels, hovered round me. Was I unhappy, he comforted—was I undecided, he advised—was I ambitious, he supported me!

Month after month passed. I was no longer a student but an artist, and my first little picture, entitled "Outside Adrianople"—of a dead horse and his rider, had been commended on the Academy walls. But nothing endures here below, and a change came at last.

Armand Daintry called. His face was pale and grave.

"What ails you?" I enquired at once.

"Nothing, but that I must leave you. I shall volunteer for Egypt to-morrow."

"Ah!" A strange tightening of the throat hushed my words.

"It's of no good hanging about in England doing nothing."

"Why not? Why not?" I asked impulsively. "Are you not happy here?"

"Happy? Too happy! Camilla, listen. The first day I saw you I knew it would be all up with me. I had seen your photograph, and said to myself, that is the girl I could have loved. I dared fate in venturing to meet you. I have dared fate in trying to continue a friendship with you while my heart was mad with love. That you have no thought of me I know. That is why I will not remain, but go where a man may do his duty and forget."

A flame-red blush caught my cheeks and lit up my eyes, then I turned icy cold. Could my pulses beat, my heart leap with joy, with rapture, while that dear dead man lay far away in a lonely grave 'neath the blistering Eastern sun? And Armand had been his friend! There seemed treachery in hearkening to words of love from him!

"And when you return?" I asked with unnatural calm.

He smiled bitterly.

"If I return I may be cured!"

"So easily?" I could not forbear exclaiming.

He grasped my hand.

"Would you not wish it so? Is it possible that if I live you would let me devote my life to giving you the happiness you have lost? that I might teach you the difference between a real love and the ideal one you pictured?"

His blue eyes shone like a sunlit heaven, and his hands, the hands which had unfalteringly bound the wounds of the suffering amidst shot and shell on the battle-field, trembled like those of a man drunk with wine.

With one great bound my heart's love went out to him, then I remembered. What would he think of a love so easily fore-sworn?

"Have you no answer for me? Will you try and forget the past?"

"Never!"

My voice was harsh and unnatural. I dared not show the emotion that almost mastered me.

"Good-bye then," he said, holding out his hand.

Something that was very like a sob rose in my throat, but I strangled it. Strangled it until he was gone. Then oh, then I dared to weep, calling him back to love, to bless me, for he could not hear.

"Armand, my beloved, stay!" I moaned through the long days and nights which followed, but I heard no more of him. If only he had refused to go and waited, how different life might have been! I comforted myself with the hope that he would return, the campaign could not be of long duration. I would wait and hope, and should he love me still, I would then let the dead past bury its dead.

If only I had let him write, but he never attempted it; he had forgotten I was a woman, and accepted my harsh decision as unchangeable! He made no effort to reverse it. The only scrap of his handwriting I possessed, was the prescription he had given me at our first meeting.

With loving hands I made a sachet of satin and placed it in its scented folds. Its commonplace lines were dearer to me than would have been the love lays of a poet. Some day I would show him how I had treasured the ragged page, which was already limp and faded with my kisses.

"News of the war! News of the war!" was roared by the vendors of specials, and I read with avidity of every engagement. There was no mention of him, doctors did not seem to count, and yet I felt convinced, that wherever he was he was doing good and gallant work in the face of danger!

At last I saw his name and knew my pride in him was justified!

A detachment of Egyptians, officered by Englishmen, had gone forth in search of the enemy, they had met and at the most critical moment the cowardly Egyptians had turned tail and fled, leaving their leaders to fight almost single-handed against overwhelming numbers.

The papers presented a graphic account of the heroic fighting which followed until the handful of officers was overpowered, the correspondent dwelling finally at some length on the coolness and courage of the doctor, Armand Daintry, who fought with them, and whose body was found surrounded by seven of the enemy, to whom he had dealt death before his own end had come!

* * * * *

Oh, loving heart, farewell! For a moment something in my brain seemed to snap, then I gathered myself together with a mighty effort and left the house. By night I had taken my passage to Egypt. What I expected to do there I cannot say, perhaps I had some vague desire to recover the body of the brave man who said he had none to care for him!

Anyway the journey saved my reason, though it is needless to say the place where he and his companions had fallen was occupied by the enemy, and impossible to every one—most of all a girl!

* * * * *

Years have passed and the events related are hazy in the mists of the past. I am what is called a happy wife and mother now.

My husband is a good man, with no sentiment and an inexhaustible fund of humour. We eat, drink, and are merry, and our children grow up bonny and fat around us. Our lives are full of social duties and employments which absorb every thought as the world wags cheerily on.

And yet sometimes perforce I stand still to breathe, to dream,

to sigh ! 'Tis then I open my faded sachet and gaze on the yellowing half-sheet and its scrawling, meaningless lines, written by the hand that can never more be lifted to succour the suffering or defend the right !

Only a prescription, but on it are my kisses and my tears !
Only a prescription, yet it recalls the glory of my life, its coming and its passing, and its burial in the bosom of the seared Egyptian sand !

L. CRESWICKE.

Shakespeare Commemorations during the Victorian Dynasty.

BY GEORGE MORLEY.

Author of "THE HISTORY OF LEAMINGTON," "RAMBLES IN SHAKESPEARE'S LAND," ETC.

IN the early years of the Victorian dynasty it was the custom to hold, at Stratford-on-Avon, every 23rd of April, a feast in commemoration of Shakespeare, who is supposed to have been born and to have died on that day.

I say "early years" advisedly, because it is clear that later years have been much less fruitful in these festivals. If I were asked the reason why these Shakespeare Commemorations at the poet's birthplace and elsewhere have decreased, I should give as my reason the fact that a small knot of illustrious writers who had a splendid enthusiasm for Shakespeare and his works have passed away, and their successors have not been animated by the same feeling. Every student of English and foreign literature, even in the early "thirties," could not worship Shakespeare with the ardour of Leigh Hunt, James Payne Collier, William Howitt, and Edward Lytton Bulwer; or the devotion of such eminent impersonators of the dramatist's characters as Edmund Kean, William Charles Macready, and Charles Kean. Great writers, indeed, are known to be rather cynical with regard to the writings of others. The Moore-Byron colloquy is an illustration of this. One day, when in a merry mood, Moore put the question to the noble poet: "I say, Byron, what do you think of Shakespeare?" Byron replied, in his petulant way, "Why, I think him a confounded humbug."

The idea of holding annual Commemorations seems to have originated with "The Shakespeare Club," an organization which was established at Stratford-on-Avon in April, 1824, and which included most of the eminent persons of the time in the literary and histrionic world. At the Birthday Festival of 1833, an announcement was read stating that His Majesty George IV. had given the club special permission to add the prefix of "Royal" to its title. It was therefore renamed "The Royal

Shakespeare Club," and, as a token of appreciation of the royal condescension, the Festival of that year was enhanced by the addition of a grand Masquerade, in the style of Garrick's Pageant of 1769, at which 250 persons appeared in Shakespeare's characters. These Shakespearian Masques were revived at intervals during the early years of the Victorian era, but they were few and far between; and when they were held, their effect was so tawdry and show-like as to fill with disgust the minds of those who wished to do real honour to Shakespeare.

In the year 1837, James Sheridan Knowles, the poet and dramatist, author of "*Virginius*," "*The Hunchback*," "*Love*," and other works of more than passing excellence, was building himself up a permanent reputation, which even his after-conduct in renouncing the stage and turning Methodist preacher could not diminish. In April, as Princess Victoria became Queen in June, he sought the leafy groves of Stratford-on-Avon to pay homage at the shrine of the world's greatest poet, and at this Commemoration he delivered a Shakespearian oration, in the course of which he uttered the remarkable, though perfectly just, opinion that "Shakespeare's genius was above man's comprehension."

For a few succeeding years the Shakespeare Commemorations leave little to record of permanent interest to the student or even the general reader. The promise of success so well begun in the first year of the Victorian dynasty was not fulfilled. Each year "the regular feast," as Leigh Hunt termed it, was served up in Shakespeare Hall by mine host of the "*Falcon*" or the "*Golden Lion*," but there was no eminent literary light present to lend lustre to the proceedings. In 1840 the chair was taken by Mr. Thomas Umbers, a then well-known agriculturist of Wappenbury, near Leamington. One hundred guests responded to the Shakespearian grace of:

" Now good digestion, wait on appetite,
And health on both."

But the next year the number of guests who came into the feast was only eighty, and many of these, I fear, were present not from love for Shakespeare, but for the feast, which upon these occasions, was held in good repute. Mr. Edward Getley presided over the banquet of 1841.

He was followed, in 1842, by E. D. Ford, chief magistrate of Stratford-on-Avon, who, in turn, was succeeded by Mr. J. B. Freer, a noted county justice, who, unlike the Sir Thomas Lucy of Elizabethan days, was an ardent admirer of Shakespeare, and gave equal attention to his poet and his law. At the Commemoration of 1843 the agricultural interest was introduced in the shape of a toast, and considering what an agricultural county Warwickshire has been for so many centuries, the introduction was not inappropriate. In future years agriculture did not occupy the dignity of a standing toast at these Shakespeare Commemorations, although it was occasionally referred to by some of the speakers.

"The Royal Shakespeare Club" completed its twentieth year of existence in April, 1844. This Festival is chiefly remarkable for the smallness of the company that assembled round the festive board. There were but twenty-five guests on each side of the table, and these fifty had for their chairman Mr. Robert Reid of Alveston. But one touch of interest was imparted to this assembly. The president of the day read a letter from the then celebrated Dr. Conolly, a well-known Shakespearian scholar, and a man who had passed through violent election storms at Coventry and Warwick. In his letter of regret at non-attendance he hoped "that on some future occasion he might have the pleasure of again assisting to celebrate the birthday of the Great Poet in his native town"; and his wish was fulfilled, for he appeared at Stratford-on-Avon at more than one Shakespeare Commemoration thereafter.

Mine host of the "Falcon" served up the feast of 1845. It was presided over, as was that of the year before, by Robert Reid, of Alveston. This birthday celebration was decidedly more hearty and entertaining than several of its predecessors. One eminent guest, if no more, graced the festive board. This was Mr. Samuel Lover, the Irish wit and poet, and the celebrated author of "Rory O'More." His presence in Shakespeare Hall, and among Shakespeare's countrymen, lent mirth and charm to the whole proceedings, and in his toast of "Sheridan Knowles and the Drama," he proved once more the liveliness of the Irish character. If there was one touch of discord at this Commemoration, it was the tendency to give very little time to Shakespeare, and a great deal to living poets.

That fine Shakespearian scholar and author, Sergeant Talfourd, was in the flesh in 1846, and living in London, where he was for many years connected with "The Shakespeare Club," which held its monthly meetings at the Piazza Coffee-house, in Covent Garden, and of which, upon several occasions, he was president. The "Shakespeare Club" at Stratford-on-Avon wanted to have the pleasure of Sergeant Talfourd's company at the birthday festival of 1846, and Chandos Wren Hoskyns, of Wroxall Abbey, the chairman of the day, wrote to invite him; but the distinguished author of "Ion," and "Glencoe, or the Fate of the Macdonalds," replied to the effect that, though nothing could have given him greater gratification than the ability to accept the flattering invitation to the most sacred spot in Britain, yet as "The Shakespeare Club" in London held its birthday festival at the Garrick Club on the same day, he would be forced to forego the pleasure of a visit to Stratford-on-Avon.

The commemoration at the Garrick Club was a distinguished and successful one. It was presided over by Lord Tenterden, who was supported by most of the literary celebrities of the day. Perhaps it is not incorrect to say that the success of "The Shakespeare Club" in London was almost entirely due to the exertions of Sergeant Talfourd, who, being an intimate friend of Macready's, and a worshipper of Shakespeare, was enabled to gather round him a galaxy of stars the like of which England can hardly boast at the present day.

Readers of BELGRAVIA may like to know the opinion of Wordsworth concerning these Shakespeare Commemorations, so I will give verbatim an interesting letter from the poet, which was read at the festival of 1847, by the then chairman, Charles Holte Bracebridge, a descendant of the celebrated Holtes of Aston Hall, Birmingham. The letter was as follows:

"Hampstead Heath, April 19th, 1847.

"MY DEAR SIR,—

'It gives me great pleasure to learn from your obliging note of yesterday, that the gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood of Stratford-on-Avon purpose to institute a Shakespearian anniversary to be celebrated in that town; nor can I be other than gratified by the expression of the wish that I should be present at the approaching meeting.

"Much do I regret that circumstances will not allow me to avail myself of the Committee's invitation, but as my earnest wishes will attend the occasion, may I venture to say that in my judgement, a *triennial* meeting would be preferable to an annual one ; as it is to be apprehended that so frequent a recurrence of the celebration, though for the first few years it might be met with pride and pleasure, would in a long course of years lose its spirit.

"The expression of this opinion will, I trust, be taken in good part by the Committee, who will accept my cordial thanks for the honour they have done me by their invitation. Let me also thank you, my dear Sir, for the trouble you have taken.

"Believe me to remain, faithfully,

"Your most obliged,

"W. WORDSWORTH.

"Chandos Wren Hoskyns, Esq."

The poet seems to have thought that this Commemoration to which he was invited was the initial one of a series. It speaks little indeed for his acquaintance with Shakespearian work to have been ignorant of the fact that for twenty-three years previously, birthday celebrations had been held every 23rd of April at Stratford-on-Avon. But Wordsworth, like Byron, was not a devout lover of Shakespeare ; indeed, his remark to Charles Lamb, that he could write as well Shakespeare "if he had a mind," demonstrates the place Shakespeare held in his esteem.

Apart from Wordsworth's letter, which I have cited because of its historical significance, the Commemoration of 1847 was singularly barren of aught save good viands and good wine, and a few good toasts. To Mine Host of the "Falcon," therefore, is due the measure of success that attended that celebration, which was of such an order as almost to justify Wordsworth's fear that the annual Commemorations would lack spirit.

Whether or not Wordsworth's letter of the preceding year had any effect, certain it is that the festival of 1848 was a marked advance upon many forerunners. The occasion was not only honoured by the presence of many distinguished persons, but there was a small exhibition of rare Shakesperian relics. Chief among these was the baptismal and death register, which was brought for the inspection of visitors, by the Rev. Mr.

Clayton, Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon. Another object of great interest was the Garrick Goblet, made from the famous mulberry tree, and presented to the great tragedian by the Mayor and Corporation of Stratford in 1769. On the death of Mrs. Garrick this goblet was sold by auction in London for 120 guineas, and was lent by the owner for view at this Commemoration. Lord Brooke, now the Earl of Warwick, of Warwick Castle, acted as chairman at the dinner, furnished by Mine Host of the "Golden Lion." This nobleman had a very keen appreciation of the genius of Shakespeare, and, like the late Mr. J. Halliwell-Phillips, took particular pleasure in collecting as many valuable works relating to the great poet as he could lay his hands upon. I am able to say that at the present time Lord Warwick's library contains many priceless surprises in Shakespeariana, including a First and Second Folio, and several copies of the original editions of the separate plays. This will no doubt be an interesting item of news for American as well as English bibliophiles.

At the Commemoration of 1848, Lord Brooke was supported in the vice-chair by James Payne Collier, an enthusiastic and erudite Shakesperian scholar. He was the chief literary guest of the day, and in proposing the toast of "The Drama," made a speech full of excellent reasoning and quiet humour. What Shakespeare did for "The Drama" was summed up by Mr. Payne Collier as follows: "Those who say that Shakespeare created the drama are doing an injustice to Shakespeare's predecessors; but he may be said to have remodelled, to have improved it, and reared it to a pitch it never before attained." Yet I have no doubt there are many students of Shakespeare who will think this criticism but faint praise, and would be prepared to prove that before the advent of Shakespeare the Drama could not reasonably be called a "creation."

In the history of Shakespeare Commemorations, the few eventful years are followed by many uneventful ones. After "the feast of reason" from town wits, comes the heavy chat of old-fashioned country Squires or Justices of the Peace. At the festival of 1849 the company was a purely local one. Not that a festival is any the worse for being resorted to by the neighbouring people; rather the reverse, because it shows that a prophet is honoured in his own country; but the advent of an eminent disciple from outside the shire undoubtedly does give

its fillip to proceedings of this kind. The Commemoration of 1849, however, had not the advantage of an illustrious "foreigner," but was simply an assembly of Shakespeare's own countrymen. Dr. Thomson, of Leamington, was the chairman of the day, and Mine Host of the "Falcon" the furnisher of the feast. There was one item in the proceedings to relieve them from being humdrum. This was the announcement, bringing joy to the heart of every lover of the poet there or elsewhere, that the purchase of Shakespeare's house by the Club had been completed during the past year.

The three years immediately succeeding 1849 have little to commend them to the notice of the historian. Dr. Thomson was chairman for 1850, Mr. Mark Phillips, of Welcombe, High Sheriff of Warwickshire, for 1851; and Charles Holte Bracebridge, of Aston Hall, for 1852. The usual feasts were held in Shakespeare Hall, and the year's report of "The Royal Shakespeare Club" was read; beyond that there was nothing to rank these commemorations any higher than a Squire's birthday dinner, given in a gaily flagged and festooned hall.

To many readers of this sketch it will no doubt be a matter of surprise to find the actor's calling so very meanly represented at these performances. With the exception of the visit of Sheridan Knowles, who was a player as well as a playwright, in 1837 there was, up to 1853, almost an entire absence of the sock and buskin element. In 1835, Mrs. Nesbitt appeared at Stratford-on-Avon in *As You Like It*, and Edmund Kean was also a celebrated and welcome visitor there in 1829. Charles Kean and Charles Kemble, too, did, upon occasion, honour the immortal dramatist by appearing at his birthplace upon his birthday; but these visits were before the commencement of the Victorian dynasty, and it is a fact that for many subsequent years the Shakespeare Commemorations at Stratford-on-Avon were unadorned by the presence of leading lights of the dramatic world.

This long poverty in actors' homage, therefore, makes the festival of 1853 a rather noted one, and gives it a right to the title of "Theatrical Commemoration." Mr. Benjamin Webster, comedian, and manager of the Adelphi Theatre, London, was the chairman of 1853; he was supported in the vice-chair by Charles Kemble, who had long been retired from the stage, of which at one time he was a conspicuous ornament. There were also other

actors present, of lesser, though respectable note, and, as might be expected under the circumstances, the proceedings were essentially theatrical. Mr. James Bennett of the Birmingham Theatre Royal, recited an ode called "The Grave of Shakespeare"; the celebrated Charles Vandenhoff, an actor at that time almost better known in America than England, effectively delivered a very graceful "Shakespearian Oration"; and this Commemoration was a better attempt to do honour to Shakespeare by practical illustrations of his works than had been made for some years.

The commemoration of 1854 was presided over by Mr. Edgar Flower of Stratford-on-Avon; that of 1855, by Chandos Wren Hoskyns, of Wroxhall Abbey; and that of 1856, by Benjamin Webster, actor, of the Adelphi Theatre, London. There was nothing in any of them to call for special comment. Each one of them was a simple reiteration of "the regular feast," which Leigh Hunt wished to see served up in tavern and dwelling.

In 1857 the attempts made to isolate and protect Shakespeare's House were brought to a successful issue. The cottages at the north and house at the south were razed, and other improvements effected at a cost of £2,500, the money being the gift of John Shakespeare, of Worthington Field, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The Royal Shakespeare Club, as was its wont, on the 23rd of April met in Shakespeare Hall. At this meeting it was resolved "that the handsome sum of £50, so generously given by Mr. John Tallis, of London, to the Royal Shakespeare Club, be invested and the interest appropriated to the assisting in the celebration of the Poet's birthday." Mr. J. Payne Collier was chairman at the commemoration dinner, at which one hundred guests sat down, including the brothers Charles and Edgar Flower. Upon this occasion toasts were numerous and well delivered, the eminent Dr. Kingsley making a great hit with "England and Saint George." The Rev. George Granville, vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, was also present, and took a leading part in this Commemoration.

The theatrical spirit from this date onward became a potent one. Leading actors recognised it, and were right in recognising it, as a sort of duty to the greatest of all dramatists to appear at Stratford-on-Avon at each recurrence of his birthday. At the Commemoration of 1858 we thus find John Baldwin Buckstone,

of the Haymarket Theatre, in the chair. The late Mr. Laman Blanchard, so well known in the world of letters as a neat and graceful versifier, was also present, and the company was one representative of many callings, from the parson to the player, and from the Lord of the Manor to the jovial agriculturist. A feature of this Commemoration was the reading of *Hamlet* by the Rev. Julian Charles Young, vicar of the village of Ilmington. Mr. Young was a relative of that Charles Mayne Young who in "the twenties" won so great a success as a tragedian, and especially as a delineator of Shakespeare's characters.

Encouraged by the success of the previous year, the Royal Shakespeare Club determined to make the Commemorations as strongly theatrical as possible. To this end the Committee prevailed upon Mr. W. H. Tilbury, of Drury Lane Theatre, to preside at the festival of 1859. It was also decided to engage Mr. Walter Montgomery, an actor of repute in those days, to give a series of Shakespearian selections. Such attractions could not fail to make their influence felt, and it was no doubt owing to them that the Commemoration of 1859 was a marked improvement upon some of its forerunners. The selections recited by Mr. Montgomery were, "The Seven Ages of Man," from *As You Like It*, the grave scene, from *Hamlet*, and the Queen Mab speech, from *Romeo and Juliet*.

Not only at Stratford-on-Avon was Shakespeare commemorated in 1859. There was another celebration in Aston Hall, Birmingham, which was presided over by William Schofield, M.P. for the town. No less than two hundred and fifty admirers of Shakespeare assembled in the great gallery of the Hall, to drink in silence to "The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare," a toast proposed by Mr. Sebastian Evans. A Shakespearian Ode of great beauty, written by Mr. J. A. Langford, of Birmingham, was recited at this commemoration. One verse was as follows :

" O large of heart, with all to feel !
 O pure of sight, all things to see !
 O rich in love, who could reveal
 Life's ever-changing mystery !
 With tongue to sing, and brain to think and plan,
 Our Shakespeare soars 'bove all, the song-inspiring man ! "

The Stratford-on-Avon Commemoration of 1860 was noted for a general holiday, and for the liveliness which attended the

performances of the Rifle Corps, and the evolutions of the Warwickshire Yeomanry Cavalry. At the evening dinner in Shakespeare Hall the Rev. Julian Charles Young was chairman, and Mr. Walter Montgomery again gave interesting recitals from Shakespeare's plays.

It appears from evidence supplied to me by the celebrated English novelist, Mrs. George Linnæus Banks, author of "The Manchester Man," "In His Own Hand," and other works of fiction, who has been honoured with a Government grant in recognition of her services to literature, that her husband had a connection with these Commemorations to Shakespeare at the poet's birthplace. In 1852 and 1853 Mr. George Linnæus Banks, a well-known journalist and lecturer, and an enthusiastic Shakespearian scholar, instituted two Commemorations at Stratford-on-Avon. These have already been alluded to in their order of dates, but the name of the prime mover, as is often the case in such matters, escaped my notice.

Mr. Banks at that time was the editor of *The Birmingham Mercury*, and worked hard to secure a success for the Commemorations he organised. He was able to engage the attendance of the leading Shakespearian actors and commentators, and the festival proceedings terminated, as on former occasions, with a dinner at the Falcon Inn. The account of the Commemoration of 1853 can now be augmented by information from Mrs. Banks. The celebrities present were presented by Mr. J. C. Onions, then of Birmingham, with library bellows made from portions of the Stratford-on-Avon "One Elm," which had been cut down through an official blunder, and which had been purchased by Mr. Onions.

This "One Elm" was not of so much historic interest as the Mulberry Tree, planted at New Place by the hand of Shakespeare himself, and which was so ruthlessly cut down by the Rev Francis Gastrell, about the year 1756; still, as Mrs. Banks informs me, it was a tree of renown. It was the tree under which the old Court Leets had assembled, under which Shakespeare doubtless had played when a boy and loved to sit in his maturity, and from which the beaters of the parish bounds had started. A silver plate was set into each of the presentation bellows mentioned above, upon which was an inscription commemorative of the festival. Through illness Mrs. Banks was not

present at either of the Commemorations organised by her husband. A pair of the "One Elm" bellows, however, were sent to her upon the occasion, and so interesting a Shakespearian gift we may be sure she very gladly accepted.

The Commemoration of 1861 was presided over by the late Sir Robert Hamilton, Bart., a gentleman who resided at Stratford-on-Avon, and took a deep interest in the political concerns of South Warwickshire. Readings were the chief features of the 1861 festival. The Rev. Julian Young gave "Julius Cæsar," and Mr. Walter Montgomery recited Tennyson's "Balaclava Charge." Guests were by no means numerous or illustrious, the one theatrical manager of standing present being Mr. Mercer Simpson, late of the Theatre Royal, Birmingham.

"Mine Host of the Shakespeare" served up the birthday banquet of 1862. It was not an auspicious gathering this year. The chairman of the day was Mr. James Bennett, actor, of Birmingham, a very good representative of the great dramatist, but hardly to be considered a tragedian of the first flight. Among the guests who had places of honour at this celebration was Mr. W. Richards, a prominent citizen of New York.

Mr. Edgar F. Flower, whose brother Charles gave such an amazing sum of money towards the erection of the Shakespeare Memorial, was Master of the Ceremonies at the Commemoration of 1863. A touch of interest was imparted to the occasion owing to the Royal Shakespeare Club having effected the removal of the Poet's desk from the Grammar School to the Museum of the Club. The Rev. Dr. Bickmore of Christ Church, Leamington, a scholarly Shakespearian and a learned Greek and Latin student, was intrusted with the toast of "The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare." As upon former occasions, Mr. James Bennett, the actor, gave readings; this time from *The Merchant of Venice*.

For two or three years previously great efforts had been made to commemorate the Tercentenary of Shakespeare with tokens of more than usual enthusiasm. Thus the year 1864 is one which stands out prominently in the roll of Shakespearian history. As a means of furthering the scheme, a deputation consisting of the Rev. George Granville, vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, and Dr. Kingsley, a member of the Shakespeare Club,

waited upon Lord Leigh, as Lord-Lieutenant of Warwickshire, and laid the plans before him. Of these his Lordship heartily approved and gave the scheme his valuable co-operation. A Tercentenary Committee was formed under the chairmanship of the Right Honourable Sir Robert Hamilton, Bart., K.C.B. ; and this set to work in earnest to make the celebration worthy of the occasion.

One of the chief notions was to hold, during the six days of the Commemoration, a series of important representations of some of the dramatist's finest works. Mr. Fechter was at that time manager of the Lyceum Theatre, and Mr. Samuel Phelps of Sadler's Wells. They were both, or imagined themselves to be, actors of the first rank, and therefore very susceptible to distinctions. The Tercentenary Committee invited Mr. Fechter to undertake the part of Hamlet. But this distinction proved displeasing to Mr Phelps, who declined to take any part whatever in the theatrical performances. Thereupon Mr. Fechter himself withdrew, and the Commemoration had to be conducted without those two representative players, who were obviously more in love with themselves than with Shakespeare. A like difficulty arose with regard to Mrs. Martin, the Helen Faucit of a few years previously, who had been requested to appear as Rosalind in *As You Like It*.

It seems that Madame Stella Colas, a successful actress of that day, who had been performing at the Haymarket and other theatres, was engaged by the committee to undertake the rôle of Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. This selection sufficed to displease Mr.—now Sir Theodore—Martin, and he wrote to the committee withdrawing his wife's services. In this dilemma, application was made to Mr. Buckstone, and he was fortunate in securing Mrs. Charles Young, who very gracefully enacted the character which Mrs. Martin had declined to perform.

A large pavilion was erected in which to represent the plays. The galleries held two thousand people, and the floor and other parts of the building were enabled to accommodate another two thousand ; so that upon that occasion, a goodly company of apostles assembled to pay homage to the memory of Shakespeare. The stage was seventy-four feet long by fifty-six feet wide, and the scenery was painted by the renowned scenic artist, Mr. W. Tebbin. Among the plays performed during the

Commemoration were *As You Like It*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, and *Twelfth Night*, the casts of each production being of a superior order. A variable tone was given to the proceedings in a series of dramatic readings by Mrs. Macready, wife of the celebrated tragedian. This gifted lady gave, with excellent effect, selections from *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Among other attractions, a mass of Shakespearian relics were shown, many libraries having been laid under contribution for the purpose. Certainly one of the chief objects of interest was the Garrick Goblet, made out of that same mulberry tree which Shakespeare planted with his own hand three centuries ago. Upon receiving this goblet at the pageant of 1769, Garrick signalled the event by composing and singing a song, the first verse of which ran as follows :

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" Behold this Goblet ! 'twas carved from the tree,
Which, O ! my sweet Shakespeare, was planted by thee.
As a relic I kiss it, and bow at thy shrine ;
What comes from thy hand must be ever divine.
All shall yield to the Mulberry Tree,
Bend to thee
Blest Mulberry.
Matchless was he
Who planted thee,
And thou, like him, immortal shall be."

At this memorable birthday festival, "the regular feast," of which Leigh Hunt did not live to partake, was attended by no less than eight hundred people. It was presided over by the Earl of Carlisle, a nobleman whose scholarly attainments and enthusiastic love for Shakespeare admirably fitted him for the post. A very pleasant incident in the course of the proceedings was the presentation of an illuminated address from Shakespearians in Germany. It was read by Professor Max Müller, and ended in the following words : " This we wish by our greeting. Hail to the memory of William Shakespeare ! Hail to the town of Stratford-on-Avon ! Hail to the people of England ! In the name of the Executive of the Hochstift, at their seat in Goethè's house. Volger, president. Kress, Heyden, Vice-Presidents. Schideck, Secretary."

The address was richly illuminated, and bore a vignette of Shakespeare, and a sketch of the houses of Shakespeare and

Goethè. On the whole, therefore, although there was much friction, great heart-burning, and much disappointment, the Stratford-on-Avon Tercentenary Celebration was a praiseworthy effort in the direction of honouring Shakespeare.

There was one evil effect consequent upon the holding of the Tercentenary Commemoration—enthusiasm seems to have died with it. For the 1864 birthday all the resources available, in all lands, were made use of, and after this united effort, apathy seems to have set in. These evidences, though manifest at the festival of 1865, were not so marked as afterwards. At this Commemoration indeed, there were several noteworthy reports, coming before the Club in the shape of presents to the museum. Thus, a picture of Shakespeare which belonged to the Bishop of Ely, and known as "The Ely Portrait," was presented by Mr. Henry Graves, of Pall Mall, London; two original quarto editions of *Hamlet*, 1603 and 1604, were given by Mr J. Payne Collier; and Mr. John Ashfield further increased the relics of interest to be found at the museum by bequeathing the old sign of the "Falcon Inn" at Bidford, where Shakespeare and his bibulous companions are supposed to have had a drinking contest with the Bidford Association of Sippers, and to have been ignominiously defeated. Upon being asked to resume the contest, the poet, it is traditionally recorded, replied: "No! I have drunk enough with

" Piping Pebworth, dancing Murston,
Haunting Hillboro, hungry Grafton;
Dodging Exhall, papist Wixford,
Beggary Broom, and drunken Bidford."

With associations like this surrounding it, the sign from the old "Falcon Inn" was a welcome present. The chairman of the "regular feast" of 1865, was James Cox, jun. mayor of Stratford-on-Avon. With the one exception of Mr. H. O. Hunt, the gathering was singularly destitute of Shakespearian scholars; in fact, it seems to have been more of a military than a Shakespearian dinner; the military element being imported by Sir Charles Mordaunt, of Walton House. The only allusions to the stage fell from Mr. James Bennett, the tragedian, who gave the toast of "the Drama" with modesty and discrimination.

There appears to have been no "regular feast" at Stratford-on-Avon at the birthday anniversary of 1866. The gentlemen

who constituted the Royal Shakespeare Club, however, met and carried a resolution for the conveyance of the legal estate in the birthplace, museum, and other properties from the two surviving trustees, James Payne Collier and Dr. Thomson, to the Corporation of Stratford-on-Avon. At Birmingham there was a Shakespeare Club, and this met at a banquet furnished in the Royal Hotel, on the Commemoration of 1866. The late Mr. George Dawson was the chairman of the evening, and his compeers were Shakespearians well known in "the Toyshop of Europe."

For four years from this date there were no regular feasts on the 23rd of each recurring April. Perhaps Shakespeare lovers had grown apathetic; certainly, the authorities at Stratford-on-Avon had not the funds with which to keep up the custom; the Tercentenary Commemoration, which was a great financial failure, though an artistic success, proving a drain upon their resources. Each year, however, there was a formal meeting, which consisted of the mayor of the day and a few friends. At these semi-private meetings, reports were read of the Shakespearian presents received during the year, and a little talk indulged in as to the doings of the future. For four years this was the kind of Commemoration offered to Shakespeare on his birthday; a poor way of honouring the bard at the best.

In 1871 "the regular feast" was revived. This was in a great measure due to the energy of the mayor, Mr. Edward Gibbs, who had deplored the falling away of the old custom. The dinner was furnished this year, as heretofore, in the Shakespeare Hall, and the chairman of the day was Mr. Gibbs. A very good company assembled, including Mr. George Dawson and Mr. Sam Timmins, both great lovers of the poet, and deeply learned in the poet's lore. The former, in very impressive language, gave the toast of the evening, "The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare," and Mr. Sam Timmins, who has himself donned the sock and buskin, proposed "the Drama" with gratifying success.

"Mine Host of the 'Red Horse'" served up the banquet of 1872. It was presided over by Mr. Robert Gibbs, one of the chief guests being Mr.—now Sir Arthur—Hodgson, of Clopton House. There is nothing of note to record in connection with this Commemoration, which was singularly barren of interest.

The Shakespeare Club at Birmingham held its usual dinner, with Mr. George Dawson as chairman.

The birthday of 1873 was honoured with an unusually good Commemoration. It seemed indeed as if some attempt had been made to resuscitate the full custom prevalent fifty years before. There was not only "the regular feast," furnished this year at the Town Hall, with Mr. Charles Edward Flower at the head of the table, but a fairly good procession preceded it, which was gay with flags and bunting, and lively with music. This procession moved to New Place, where Bishop's delightful serenade, "O, by rivers, by whose falls," was given, and made a pretty variation in the programme. The late Marquis of Hertford was present at this "regular feast," and made some apt and pleasing remarks upon the genius of Shakespeare. This nobleman, whose seat was at Ragley, near Alcester, was killed in the Warwickshire hunting-field in 1884. Miss Glyn, the well-known dramatic reader, gave selections from the plays of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and, all things considered, this Commemoration was an improvement upon some of its immediate predecessors.

It seems, however, as upon former occasions, to have exhausted the enthusiasm and funds of the Stratford-on-Avon authorities, for there was no feast in Shakespeare's town in 1874, and for several subsequent years. A little group of warm enthusiasts at Leamington, did, it appears, make the first attempt at a Commemoration in that town. The dinner was served at the Crown Hotel and presided over by Mr. William Watkin, the chairman of the Local Board. The late J. Tom Burgess, antiquarian, editor of *The Leamington Spa Courier*, and author of "Historic Warwickshire," gave with much grace and judgment the toast to "The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare." At this celebration a poem, not then in print, from the pen of Mr. George Markham Tweddell, was read. The author was a noted Shakespearian, and wrote his poem, which was entitled "The Welcombe Hills in the Land of Shakespeare," during a visit to the late Mr. Mark Phillips at Welcombe Park. The opening lines of the poem ran as follows :

" Hail, Hills of Welcombe ! once again I tread
Your glorious sward, where Shakespeare oft has roamed
Before me. May some ethereal flame
From his bright spirit so impregnate mine,
That I may feel the inspiration he
So oft has felt when he has wandered here."

A break of four years, during which there was a lapse of the "regular feast," brings the record up to 1879. In that year the Memorial Theatre was finished and opened with great pomp and circumstance on the poet's birthday. The festival was in many ways a noteworthy one. Extensive street decorations were prepared, but the weather, as in the case of Garrick's Jubilee Pageant of 1769, was against this form of worship. A luncheon was furnished in the Town Hall, with the originator of the memorial, Mr. C. E. Flower, in the chair. The aristocracy were represented by Lord Leigh, who laid the stone of the Memorial Theatre; the clergy by the Rev. Canon Baynes—a singularly gifted man, who proposed in eloquent language, "The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare"; and the stage by Helen Faucit (Lady Theodore Martin) and Mr. F. B. Chatterton, of Drury Lane Theatre. The first performance ever given in the Memorial Theatre took place upon the evening of this day. *Much Ado About Nothing* was the piece chosen and, as the event was an interesting one in Shakespearian history, I append the cast of characters:

BENEDICK	Mr. Barry Sullivan.
DON PEDRO	Mr. Luigi Lablache.
DON JOHN	Mr. Herbert Jenner.
CLAUDIO	Mr. Edward Compton.
LEONATO	Mr. John Ryder.
BALTHAZAR	Mr. W. H. Stephens.
DOGBERRY	Mr. Frank Barby.
VERGES	Mr. W. H. Cummings.
BEATRICE	Mrs. Theodore Martin (Helen Faucit).
HERO	Miss Wallis.
URSULA	Miss Hudspeth.
MARGARET	Miss Golien.

The play, which was interpreted with zeal and judgment, was preceded by a poetical epilogue, written by Dr. Westland Marston and spoken by Miss Kate Field, a lady exceedingly popular at Stratford-on-Avon. During this festival, which lasted for five days, other Shakespearian plays were performed, of which perhaps the most successful was *Hamlet*, with Mr. Barry Sullivan as Hamlet, and Miss Wallis as Ophelia.

Since that time there has been a singular poverty of Shakespeare Commemorations at his birthplace. There is no "regular feast" now, and the only form of recognising the day during the "eighties" and, so far, the "nineties," has been the giving of a

series of dramatic performances, in which Shakespeare has not been so well represented as he might or should have been. In an article published in the May number, 1890, of *Lippincott's Magazine*, I made the suggestion that Mr. Henry Irving should follow the example of his illustrious predecessors and visit Stratford on the poet's birthday for the purpose of performing there. Mr. Irving wrote to say that he *will* go down with his Lyceum players. Again, there is a movement on foot at Stratford-on-Avon for the resuscitation of the birthday feast, about which Leigh Hunt was so enthusiastic; so that ere long a properly conducted Shakespeare Commemoration should be seen yearly at the poet's birthplace.

Quintette.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"WAS not that a delightful waltz? I never enjoyed one half so much in all my life."

The speaker was a tall, handsome man of about eight and twenty years, named Jack Stanmore.

The beautiful girl at his side looked up with a languid smile as he spoke.

"Yes," she replied, "but it's much too hot for dancing. Had we not better rest awhile in the conservatory to cool ourselves?"

Queenie Tilbury, who was standing at a little distance from the couple, caught his remark; and a deep colour tinged her fair face as she heard it. Had he not said the very same words to herself when they had danced together scarcely half-an-hour before, and had she not been led to believe him sincere? Oh! why had she been foolish enough to make herself think that she cared for him?—She, who had only seen him once before in all her life. Yet, somehow or other, she had already begun to feel as if he belonged to her.

Had he not told her that she was all the world to him, that he had loved her from the first moment he saw her? When he had danced with her he told her that he detested waltzing as a rule, because he rarely got a partner to suit him; but that it was delightful to waltz with her, and he would never get a partner to equal her.

She had felt both pleased and flattered at this. Oh! it was cruel to dash her happiness to the ground in this fashion.

Was he a cruel flirt, and said the same to every girl he met? Or was it the money that attracted him? For Miss Grierson the young lady with whom he had been dancing, was well known to be the richest girl in the town.

Queenie tried to put these thoughts from her, and forget him, but it spoilt the evening for her nevertheless. Her first ball, too, and she had been enjoying herself so much.

He came again later in the evening to ask her for another dance, but her programme was filled. He expressed his

disappointment, and left her. In a few minutes she saw him dancing again with Miss Grierson, who was unusually energetic that evening, for dancing was too much trouble as a rule for her.

Queenie's partner noticed her abstracted look now and then, and asked her if she had had any bad news. She laughingly replied in the negative, but, she added :

"I cannot help wondering if Auntie is lonely without me this evening, we're quite inseparables, you know."

It was indeed a rare thing to see one without the other, and it was only Mrs. Fulton's personal dislike to dancing or ball-rooms that had induced Queenie to come without her. She used to say, "Dancing is all very well for those who like it, my dear, but for my part, I don't see any sense in jiggling round." However, she was pleased enough for her niece (on whom she doted) to go ; and when the invitation came for the ball, which was given in honour of Queenie's chief friend Mabel Beckton, Mrs. Fulton had been as eager as her niece in making preparations for it, and Queenie and three other friends had gone together.

* * * * *

Towards the close of the evening, Mabel sought out her friend to ask her if she had enjoyed herself. Queenie replied, "Immensely," but this was really only true concerning the first part of the ball.

CHAPTER II.

QUINTETTE TILBURY, for such her name really was, was an orphan. She had been so named on account of being the fifth child—all girls. They first called her so merely in joke, but somehow or other, the name stuck to her and she had been christened Quintette, though they always called her Queenie, which was softer and prettier.

Her four sisters were much older than she, and had been married before their parents died, which happened three years ago, when Queenie was nineteen.

It was a fearful blow at the time, both her father and mother being wrecked in one of those fearful storms so prevalent in the English Channel. So Queenie had gone to live with her aunt, who, having no children of her own had bestowed the whole affection of her warm heart on her niece.

Mr. Tilbury had left Queenie a small annual income, which with care, she managed to make support her; having a great horror of being a burden to anyone, even to her aunt, of whom she was so fond.

She had first met Jack Stanmore in a rather romantic fashion. Mrs. Fulton and Queenie were returning home one afternoon, six weeks previously. The roads were like a sheet of glass, and Queenie had slipped down. In doing so she twisted her ankle, which gave her great pain. Mr. Stanmore, who was on the other side of the way, saw the accident and hurried across to assist.

Poor Queenie struggled bravely to her feet, but found she could not walk a step, but by the help of her aunt and Mr. Stanmore (who begged them to accept his services), she managed to reach home, which was little more than a hundred yards distant.

Mr Stanmore carried her up the steps and right in on to the dining-room sofa, and was gone, almost before they had time to thank him.

He called next day to enquire after her, but Queenie did not see him.

The sprain, or twist, proved but slight, and she was about, again, in little more than a week's time.

A few days later, in relating the accident to her friend Mabel, she was astonished to hear that the Becktons knew Mr. Stanmore well. Queenie asked how it was that she had never heard them speak of him?

"But," said Mabel, "you've heard of Jack Melson, well, that is he. His name is Jack Melson Stanmore. His uncle died recently, and having no children he left Jack his fortune, on condition that he would also take his name. After everything was paid, the money was found to be much less than was expected."

"How strange," said Queenie. "I've often heard you speak of Jack, who has been away at college for so long, but never dreamed that I should make his acquaintance in that fashion. The world is but small you see."

* * * * *

When on the night of the ball Queenie had met him again, he seemed so pleased to see her, and when, after the second dance with her, he told her he had loved her from the first moment he saw her Queenie felt very happy—and then—oh—cruel——

Through all the next week she tried to convince herself that she did not care for him, or for what she had overheard.

Yet she could not crush him out of her thoughts, and she was, at last, reluctantly obliged to confess to herself that she *did* care. She told her aunt all about it, and Mrs. Fulton sympathized with her, but begged her not to give him another thought, adding, that it was much too sudden to be sincere, and most likely he said the same to every girl he met.

So the days went by. He had called once or twice to see her aunt, but they had been out each time.

One day, as Mrs. Fulton and Queenie were entering the large "store," for which the town was noted, who should be coming out but Mr. Stanmore and Miss Grierson.

"So," thought Queenie, "it is really true, and my ears did not deceive me." He raised his hat, and coloured slightly as he passed them.

CHAPTER III.

TWO years elapsed. Queenie had many offers, all of which she refused. She said, "She had no wish to be married, and that she did not care to leave her aunt."

They were sitting at breakfast one morning when an exclamation from Mrs. Fulton made Queenie look up from a letter she was perusing.

"What's the matter, auntie, dear?" said she.

"Why, child, there was a fearful accident last night on the line from Liverpool to G—. The train was entirely wrecked, owing to some wrong signalling. Nearly three hundred people have been killed or wounded."

"How dreadful!" said Queenie, as she took the paper from her aunt's hand. She read through name after name of the poor unfortunate victims, who one moment were in perfect health and vigour, and the next, in less time than it takes to write, were maimed (perhaps for life), or plunged into Eternity.

Fathers and mothers in the prime of life, young men and maidens, with apparently a long life before them, little children, happy innocents, with no thought or care to trouble them—all—all victims to this dreadful and unforeseen accident.

"Poor things!" murmured Queenie, as she read the fearful

account of the dead and dying being extricated from the *débris*. She had been through nearly all the names when her eye fell upon the one—could she believe her senses—of Jack Stanmore.

She did not scream, and by a great effort she prevented herself from fainting, but she turned as white and cold as a marble statue.

"Queenie, dear, are you ill?" said Mrs. Fulton, alarmed at her niece's white face. She picked up the paper which had dropped to the floor, and Queenie pointed to the name of Jack Stanmore—crushed and dying. "Poor fellow! How shocking!" was all she could say.

"Where are you going, dear?" said Mrs. Fulton, as Queenie rose from the table, and was leaving the room.

"Going to him," she answered very quietly.

"But, my child, that would be madness. It is nearly three hundred miles from here, and no doubt there will be plenty of people to attend to him. Besides he's been away two years, and is most likely married now."

"If I am not wanted I will return," said Queenie, "but I must go to see how he is, and if there really is any one to attend to him in that outlandish place. Does not 'one good turn deserve another.' How should I have got home that winter I fell down but for his kindly assistance?"

"Well, dear, as you seem to have made up your mind to go I will say no more against it, but you must take Susan; I am sorry I cannot go with you myself, but my business matters must be attended to at once."

"I'm sure you can't spare Susan, auntie; I may be gone some time?"

"Yes, dear, I can; I shouldn't think of allowing you to go alone."

Mrs. Fulton packed up the few things that would be required, and in less than an hour Queenie and the trustworthy servant (who had known her from babyhood) were whirling away in just such a conveyance as had caused poor Jack Stanmore's accident, if not his death.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Queenie and her attendant arrived at the place where the accident happened, they found that it was only a small village, with very little accommodation.

All the people who were too much injured to be moved any distance had been taken to some empty cottages close at hand. The villagers had been very kind, and had done all in their power to make the poor sufferers comfortable. Some of them had lent bedsteads, mattresses, blankets, etc.

Queenie enquired for Mr. Stanmore, and was directed to one of the cottages at the end of the row. She asked the doctor (for so he seemed to be) if anybody was with him. He replied in the negative, so Queenie made straight for the cottage. Seeing the door ajar, she knocked softly, and hearing no sound entered.

On an extemporized bed lay the form of Jack Stanmore—white as death. Queenie stooped down to see if he breathed.

"Thank Heaven! he is still alive," she murmured.

How changed he was, as he lay there so white and still. What a contrast to the lively, handsome fellow she had hitherto known.

Queenie seemed rooted to the spot, as she stood looking down on him, and thought of all he had suffered, and would still suffer. She wondered in what way he had been crushed, and whether it was possible for him to recover. That he was very seriously hurt, she did not need to be told; and she wished that she might bear it all for him. How long Queenie would have stood there it is impossible to say, had not someone entered the room, and so put an end to her reverie. It was one of the women of the village who were devoting their time to the sufferers. She started on seeing a lady, and would have retreated, with a whispered apology; but Queenie made a sign to her not to go, and then, beckoning her out of the cottage, she asked if anyone had been to see the gentleman. The nurse replied that no one had either been or sent, at which they were all very much astonished, for he was well-dressed and had a good bit of money about him, besides jewellery, so he was evidently well-off. They had found a card with his name on, but there was no address whatever about him, so they did not know where to send.

Queenie told her that she knew the gentleman and would communicate with his friends. She also told her that she had come to help with the nursing. The poor woman was very thankful to hear this, for though there were many others besides herself who had offered their services, still they were not sufficient to attend to so large a number of wounded men, women and children.

Queenie telegraphed to her aunt at once to tell her how matters stood, and that she had taken rooms for herself and maid at the inn. She next telegraphed to Mr. Stanmore's father's residence, but she received a reply from the housekeeper saying that the family were travelling on the Continent. This accounted for no one having been to see him.

When Queenie returned to the cottage she found the doctor there, and asked him if there was any hope of Mr. Stanmore's recovery. He replied, "It is a very bad case; the left leg has been badly crushed, and head very much hurt, which has caused delirium, but I think, if the fever abates by to-morrow, with careful nursing he will pull through."

Queenie was very thankful to hear that there was some hope, and when the doctor had gone she could hardly refrain from crying. She determined that if nursing could save him he should live. A sudden thought struck her—"What will he think if he sees me here? He must not know I came down here on his account; I will ask the doctor to give me a certain number of the patients in my charge, which I will call 'my ward.'" Queenie set to work to make things as neat and comfortable as she could for the sick man. When the doctor came again she asked him how many of the patients she might undertake to nurse.

"Well," he replied, "you could have this cottage and the next in your charge, making five patients in all, but if you find it is too much for you, you must have help; it would never do for you to knock yourself up. We don't want another invalid, Miss Tilbury," he added smiling, as he noticed how pale she looked.

In the next room to Mr. Stanmore was a little fellow about five years old. This poor child had lost both father and mother in the accident, and as yet they had been afraid to break the news to him. His father was a soldier, and had just returned from India, where he had been for three years. The poor

mother had taken their little boy to meet him as soon as the ship came in—and now the little fellow was left an orphan.

In the next cottage (they were little three-roomed cottages, the third room being a small stone kitchen) were two women and a young girl about fifteen. Their injuries were not so serious, and their illness was mostly due to the violent shock they had received. Queenie went round to her charges, and comforted them as best she could, for each had a tale of woe to relate, and Queenie was a very sympathetic listener. They felt as if an angel had been sent to minister to them, as they watched her flit about so noiselessly.

Meanwhile, the hitherto unconscious man, in the adjoining cottage was gradually coming-to. Slowly, very slowly, he remembered the accident, and looking round, tried to realize what was the matter with him, and where he was. He tried to move, but the effort was too painful.

Queenie had left Susan in charge, while she had gone to take a few hours' rest. Mr. Stanmore looked hard at Susan, as if trying to recollect where he had seen her. She came to his bedside, and smiled cheerfully, when she perceived that he was conscious.

"Where am I?" he asked feebly.

She told him; adding: "But you must keep quite still and not talk any more, for the doctor says you need perfect rest and quiet,

"Just one word more," he replied. "Can you tell me if I have broken any bones?"

"No; you have not; but your left leg was very much crushed. The doctor was afraid at first that it would have to come off; but he thinks you'll do now."

The sick man closed his eyes again as if he would sleep, and Susan, fearing the conversation might have excited him too much, supported his head while he drank a small portion of a soothing draught that was prepared for him.

When the doctor came again he noticed a great change for the better in his patient, who, from that moment, began steadily to recover. Queenie nearly danced for joy when she heard it, but, on the doctor's advice, she kept out of sight for a few days.

She visited the sick room very cautiously, and only when its occupant was sleeping. One day Queenie had taken advantage of

his being asleep to make several little delicacies for him, and had sent Susan to get some rest. She had finished her cooking, and was sitting down, her fingers busily sewing. The little orphaned boy had been so much hurt that they had to cut his clothes off him; so Queenie was making him a sailor suit out of an old blue serge dress of hers, for which she had sent home. It was nearly finished now, and the little fellow looked forward with delight to wearing the pretty new clothes with the brass buttons.

She was stitching away, and smiling to herself as she did so when a low exclamation made her look up, to find the eyes of Jack Stanmore fixed wonderingly upon her. Queenie rose, blushing and confused, but the instincts of the "nurse" made her overcome her feelings, knowing that he must not be excited. She moved quietly towards the bed.

"What! You here!" he exclaimed. "Do I dream, or is it really Miss Tilbury that I see?"

"You do not dream, Mr. Stanmore; it is quite true. I read of the accident and came down to offer my services as nurse, as they were so short of hands. I had always a liking for nursing, and I've been so successful that I have serious thoughts of entering the force, and becoming a 'Sister of the Red Cross.' But there! I really must not talk any more, or I shall have the doctor calling me over the coals for undoing all the good that ten days' nursing has done you."

CHAPTER V.

IT is not worth while to dwell on the weeks that followed, before Mr. Stanmore was able to bear a journey.

Now that he was partly convalescent he had a newspaper sent him daily from a neighbouring town.

One day he asked Queenie if she cared to read about finery; if so, there was a glowing account of a fashionable marriage she could read.

She took the paper and was surprised to find it was an account of the marriage of Miss Grierson to Lord——

"You seem surprised, Miss Tilbury," he said.

"Well—yes—I had an idea that Miss Grierson was engaged to—to——"

"Ah! I understand; you thought that I was going to marry

her. Well, it *did* come pretty near an engagement ; for my father was very disappointed that my uncle's fortune was so small, in fact not sufficient to keep up the estate. To do so he insisted on my marrying an heiress, and Miss Grierson was the lady he chose for me. Her parents would not hear of the match, however. They had made up their minds that their daughter, with her fortune, should marry a titled man.

" I was not sorry, for I really did not care for her at all. My father was so bent on it that I hardly liked to disappoint him, for he had been awfully good to me. I cost him an unconscionable amount of money while I was at the University. When her parents set their faces against it, of course that settled it. I am only too thankful now that I did not give myself the opportunity to 'repent at leisure.'

" I sold my uncle's estate, and went abroad. It brings me in a tidy little income, nevertheless ; quite sufficient for my simple wants—for I left off my extravagant habits long ago—— It might even suffice for *two*," he added, slyly eyeing her.

" Miss Tilbury," he went on, "do you know what was bringing me back to Littleton ? Not my parents, for they are still abroad ; but a certain face that has haunted me for the last two years. A face that is fair to look upon, and in which the goodness of heart is plainly reflected. Can you guess who is the owner of that face ?" he asked, looking tenderly at the one before him that was blushing so vividly as he spoke. "Queenie, dearest, it is your own sweet self. I know I am not worthy of you, but say you forgive the way I treated you, and give me leave to hope that some day you will consent to be my wife. In spite of appearances I have loved you from the very first—and you only. Ever since I saw your dear face, the day you fell down, it has been constantly before me, until I could bear it no longer—so I determined to come home and try my fate. Thank God ! I find you still free. To you I owe my life. The doctor told me plainly that I could never have recovered but for your careful nursing. Tell me, do you think you could love me a little, dearest ?"

He stroked her hair fondly as she sat with her head leaning against the arm of his chair, crying softly.

She dried her tears and said in a low voice, scarcely above a whisper : "Jack, dear, I've loved you all along."

"Bless you, my darling, for those words," he murmured. "It seems almost too good to be true. When I opened my eyes that day and saw you sitting before me, I thought I was dreaming and that it was only your image my fevered brain had conjured up."

Then Queenie told him all about herself. How she had overheard his conversation with Miss Grierson at the ball, and how miserable it had made her. How, that she could not forget him, try as she would, all through the two long years he had been away. Then, reading of the accident, her determination to come and help with the nursing. The pitiable state in which she found him, etc., etc.

"My poor Queenie! To think of your going through all this for me. It seems as if Providence has brought us together again—never to part."

* * * * *

Six months later Jack Stanmore married Quintette Tilbury in the parish church of Littleton.

A merry day it was, too, remembered long after by the villagers.

Very pretty the young bride looked, in her simple dress of white, ornamented with orange blossoms. They looked a handsome pair as they left the church; Queenie leaning on her husband's arm, her face as radiant as a sunbeam.

Mrs. Fulton was, of course, very sorry to lose the companionship of her niece, but was delighted to see them so happy. The young couple insisted on her moving to a little villa close to their pretty home, so that they might see her every day. She was not lonely, however, for she adopted the little orphan boy that Queenie had so tenderly nursed back to health and strength, and does all in her power to make up for the fearful loss he sustained. He is now a bright, chubby little fellow, as happy as the days are long, for "Dear Auntie" is so kind.

* * * * *

Mabel Beckton was the first to congratulate Queenie on her return from the honeymoon.

"Oh! I am so glad, dear; you seem made for one another," she said, as she kissed the young bride affectionately.

So, dear reader, we will leave them, trusting that they may continue in happy unison to the end of their days.

Sonnet.**A DAY IN SEPTEMBER.**

THE storm beats down upon the golden sheaves—
The glistening raindrops hang on bough and spray—
The sombre sky is one pale mass of grey—
The gusty wind blows through the russet leaves,
And I, caught in the web which Fancy weaves,
Sit still and dream the lonely hours away ;
My heart and I are sad this autumn day.
Dreamland is fair, but yet too oft deceives.
The hills have faded from the distant view,
Rain-washed and clouded they are lost to sight ;
My dreams will fade, perchance be tear-stained too,
And may not like those hills again grow bright.
But Spring returns, Earth will her youth renew,
And I'll dream on, though shadows cross the light.

CHARLOTTE A. PRICE.

A Cornish Maid.

BY BARBARA LAKE,

Author of "THE BETRAYAL OF REUBEN HOLT," "A PROFITLESS QUEST," etc. etc.

CHAPTER XVII.

CLEM'S LETTER.

IT was the day on which Clem Freer and Mr. Lane had met at the Paddington Railway Station—the day before the one fixed for the wedding of Miller Penrose and Jenny Caerden. It was a cheerless day, too, blustering, cold, and, withal, disposed to be showery. There must, moreover, have been something depressing in the atmosphere just then; for, taking them all round, the good folks of Treverdale seemed to be grumpy and to have adopted gloomy views of things in general; while even the pretty village itself wore a dismal and comfortless look.

Mary Seaton, however, was an exception to the prevailing gloom, for she was too busy to be affected by extraneous circumstances. She had been up betimes, with the object of getting through her domestic duties as early as possible, for she had yielded to Jenny's entreaties that she would be her bridesmaid, and she had the finishing touches to put to the new gown she was to wear on the morrow.

Mrs. Ashdown was keeping to her bedroom, on account of the cold wind; but Mary had tenderly ministered to all her wants, and was just regarding her new frock with deeply admiring eyes, when Jenny Caerden, a shawl flung carelessly over her head and shoulders, came flying into the kitchen.

"Oh, Mary," she cried, "what *do* 'ee think's happened, now?—I ha' got a letter from Clem Freer, 't last! T' pos'-boy brought it to me more'n a hour ago, but I couldn't come down wi' it before, 'cos o' gitten' t' tiresome chil'ren off to school an' sech. 'Tis a dreadful letter, too—un's bin ill an' a lot o' things, an' I'm sure I doan't know what to do, I doan't, i'deed!'

And she flung poor Clem's letter on the table.

"Shall I read it?" asked Mary, who was looking a little scared and pale.

"Iss, do, there's a dear," said Jenny. "P'rhaps you'll be able to tell what's best to be done 'bout it—I'm sure *I* doan't know! Read it out loud, will 'ee?"

"It is very sad," sighed Mary, breaking a brief silence that had followed the reading of the letter. "Poor Clem! Think of his lying ill, so long amongst strangers, with not even a line from you, Jenny, to cheer him through it!"

"What's t' *use* o' thinking o' it?" returned Jenny, gloomily. "O' course 'tis sad, an' it makes me very mis'able; but what am I to do?"

"I don't see that there's anything to be done now," said Mary.

"Waal, no, I s'pose not; but I wish Clem hadn't writ to me at all, since un didn't do it sooner."

"But he says he *has* written, you know, and hasn't got any answers from you. I suppose his letters couldn't have got mislaid? I mean, I suppose you couldn't have laid them by and forgotten them?"

"Lors, no, o' course not," scornfully. "What nonsense, Mary!" And Mary was satisfied that the girl spoke in good faith—that she had not received the letters Clem referred to.

"It is very strange what can have become of them," she remarked.

"Iss, 'tis, i'deed," agreed Jenny. "If eny wan else but Clem had sed he'd sent 'em, I shouldn't ha' b'lieved it a bit. But un never spoke a ward that wasn't true 'bout anything—never; an' I wish I could say t' same o' t' miller."

"I don't like to hear you talk that way, Jenny—it is never wise to make comparisons, you know. Besides, you must forget all about Clem Freer, now."

"Iss, o' course I must; but if—if I'd ha' had they letters he tells 'bout, things might ha' bin diff'rent."

"They might have been, though I don't think they would," said Mary, gravely shaking her head, and feeling that the time for regret was past. "It seems to me, from what Clem says, that he's not much in the way of making money enough to keep a wife in ease and comfort; and you know you would never be content to be poor, Jenny, just for love's sake."

"I s'pose I shouldn't," sighed Jenny, dreamily gazing out of the window. "I know I allus sed so ; but sometimes, since I ha' made up my mind to break wi' Clem, I ha' felt as if his love was warth all t' walth i' t' warld—as if 'twould content me better than aught else. But there," turning away from the window, and speaking impatiently, "'tis too late to talk o' that, now. Only, doan't 'ee think, Mary, un ought to be told o'—o' what's going t' happen? I mean, 'bout my marryin' t' miller."

"I hardly know," returned Mary, looking perplexed. "It seems hard not to tell him, but perhaps it will be best to let him keep in ignorance for a time. Still, if you want to send him a few last words, saying how——"

"Awh, but I doan't—I durstn't do it. I couldn't. No, I shall never write to Clem, agen—never, never agen !"

"I think it best not to, certainly," said Mary. "It may be kinder to let the news of your marriage get to him its own way. Even if he doesn't hear of it at all, and should come down to the village to see what keeps you so silent, why, you'll be comfortably settled by then, and you won't mind meeting him as a friend."

"I hope an' trust he 'ull never come anigh t' place agen," cried Jenny, with sudden passion. "I couldn't abear to set eyes on his face, an' see it looking mis'erable. 'T would break my heart !"

"Oh, he wouldn't be miserable for long," said Mary, startled by her friend's outburst, but speaking cheerily. "Men ain't like women—they don't brood over things as we do. I daresay when he finds he can't have you, he will marry some other nice girl and be happy enough."

"I doan't b'lieve Clem 'ull ever care for enywan else but me," declared Jenny. And with hands that shook with ill-suppressed excitement, she unconsciously took up and examined various small articles in Mary's neat work-box. "I—I doan't b'lieve he 'ull ever git married. Oh, Mary," pushing the box from her. "I couldn't abear my Clem to fall i' love wi' eny maid but me. I couldn't—I couldn't abear un to wed her !"

"Oh, Jenny, that sounds very selfish."

"Waal, p'raps 'tis, but I can't help it. I hate to think o' his holding eny other maid to his breast an' calling her sweet, loving names, as un did me. I hate to think o' his pressing kisses—my—my kisses—on her lips, an' whisp'r'in' tender wards in her ears.

Oh, Clem," yielding, for a few moments, to her true feelings—the feelings she was so determined to conquer—"I wish, I wish I had bin true to 'ee. Oh, if I could only lay my head down on your dear breast an' die, this minute, how glad, iss, how glad I should be. Oh, Clem! Oh, Clem, Clem, Clem!" and wringing her hands, she sobbed convulsively.

"My dear girl," cried Mary, in consternation, "I had no idea things were like this with you. Don't cry so, Jenny, for goodness' sake. You mustn't marry the miller, to-morrow, if this is how you feel for Clem Freer."

"Awh, Mary," striving to stay the torrent of her tears, "I'm a wicked maid—false, false an' wicked. I doan't know what 'tis has come over me o' late, but I doan't b'lieve I shall ever be happy eny more. No, I doan't—not though t' miller's ever so kind—not though I'm ever so waal off an' looked up to."

"This is terrible," said Mary, deeply distressed. "Your marriage must be broken off, somehow. Shall I call Will in, and ask him what we'd better do?"

"No, no, Mary—doan't 'ee do that. Let me alone for a bit—I dessay I sha' be myself agen, presen'ly."

"But your feelings will still be the same, Jenny, and you ought not to marry Tom Penrose when your heart is with Clem Freer. No happiness can come of it—nothing can come of it but sorrow and self-reproach; and you must not do it."

"'Tis too late to think o' thaat now, Mary," resolutely drying the tears from her eyes. "What 'ud folks say if t' weddin' was stopped? 'Sides, t' parson's bin spoke to, frien's ha' bin bidden, an' t' miller's got a gran' dinner ordered for 'em. No, I'm a stupid to ha' got cryin' so, but 'tis too late to talk o' breakin' things off now."

"Oh, Jenny, it's not too late. I wish I had known how it was with you, sooner—matters shouldn't have gone on so far, I declare. I knew you didn't care for the miller—how should you?—but I thought you had ceased to care for Clem, and that ease and plenty would make up to you for—for many things that might be wanting in your new life."

"Iss, an' I daresay they will; 'cos ease an' plenty's what I ha' allus wanted. I sha'n't keep all on feelin' as I do now," with a sobbing sigh; "'tis Clem's letter that's helped t' upset me."

"Yes—that's because it ha's helped to show you how dear he is

to you, still. It would be a terrible, a wicked thing, to marry the miller, feeling like you do! Let me go and tell him how matters stand with you—that you've had a letter from Clem Freer, and that the wedding must be put off. I sha'n't mind what he says—he can bluster as much as he likes. Anything would be better than marrying him, when your heart's so far away. Let me go to him and tell him all, Jenny. Do, now, there's a dear?"

And for a few moments—only a few moments—Jenny hesitated. Then a cold, resolved look settled on her beautiful face, and, with an unfaltering tongue, she spoke her own doom.

"No, Mary," she said, "I woan't let 'ee go. As I told 'ee jes' now, 'tis too late, quite too late. I ka' made my bed, an' I'll lay on it. This mis'rable feeling that worrets me so, 'ull pass away, byme-by, an' then I should be sorry 'cos I'd a given up my chance o' walth an' persition. No; I'll be wed to-morrer. For good or for ill, I'll be wed to-morrer."

"Oh, Jenny, Jenny!" lamented Mary, turning away with a sorrowful gesture.

"Awh, now, doan't 'ee look like tha't, Mary," flinging her arms about her friend's neck, and kissing her. "I 'ud let 'ee go to t' miller, d'rec'ly, only—only I know for sure I should be sorry for it, as soon as t' weddin' was broke off. I'm not t' maid for a poor man's wife, an' I shouldn't be happy, not if I loved un ever so."

"Well, dear, I suppose it's of no use pleading with you any more," said Mary, tears dimming her eyes as she returned the other's caress, "but I am so afraid of your being sorry for your marriage when it is too late to undo it."

"Oh, I sha'n't be sorry," declared Jenny. "If I get all I want, an' plenty o' money to spen', I shall be content enough."

"But how will it be with you if you *don't* get all you want?—if the miller isn't as kind and liberal as he promises to be?"

"Awh, but un will be. I doan't see how un can help it, wance I'm his wife."

"Still," sighed Mary, "I can't help thinking it would be better to put the marriage off—if only for a week or so. Now, won't you sit down quiet for half-an-hour, Jenny, and consider things over, again? It is clear that Clem's letter's upset your mind a bit; and it would only be wise to wait and ask yourself if you

are quite, quite sure you are content to give him up for the miller."

"Iss, p'raps 'twould; but my mind's fixed to be married to-morrer."

"Very well, then—it's settled, and we won't say any more about it. We'll only hope and think that all will be well and happy with you."

"I doan't see why 't shouldn't. All I'm afraid of 's seeing Clem agen. I couldn't abear to hear him say hard things or to know he meant to forget me; an'—an'—but, there!—I woan't talk 'bout it any more—'t only upsets me. An', Mary, I want 'ee to do something for me. You'm sech a good friend—I doan't think 'ee 'ull mind, will 'ee?"

"Tell me what you want, dear," said Mary, gently. "I'll do anything for you I can."

"Awh, I was sure 'ee would! Waal, 'tis this I want 'ee to do. When t' weddin' an' t' dinner an' everything's over, to-morrer, will 'ee write a few lines to Clem, an' tell un all 'bout what's happened?"

"Y—es."

"That's roight! Tell un I had his letter an'—an' that I was very sorry for un, but it came too late. Iss, tell un thaat, an' say I sent my dear love—'t least, no, I doan't mean love—say I sent un my best wishes, an' I hoped un' wouldn't think very ill o' me, or quite f—for—forget me; an'—an'—Bother take these stupid tears, I wish 'em wouldn't keep gittin' in wan's eyes so!—an' tell un I wasn't warthy o' his love an' truth, Mary. Un woan't b'lieve it, I know," pausing in her rapidly-uttered instructions to choke back a threatened fit of renewed sobbing, "but—but tell un I sed so, an' that I hope un 'ull be happy, some day. Will 'ee tell un all this, Mary?"

"Yes, dear."

"You 'ull know how to put it, an' 'twill ease my heart to feel 'tis done. I'll leave you t' letter, so's you can see where to write, an' you can gi' it back to me, afterwards. I doan't like to think o' his findin' things out no other ways, an' p'raps when un knows I'm wed an' settled, un woan't wan' to come this ways along, agen. I should dearly love to see un, jest wance more, but I know 'twill be best not to."

"There can't be any doubt about that, Jenny," said her

listener, glancing at her troubled and tear-dimmed eyes. "If it is only to keep him from coming down here again, I will write, as you say—though I'm afraid I shall find it a hard and sorrowful task."

"You'm a dear, true friend, Mary—there's no wan else 'ud do as you ha' done by me, an' I woan't forget it in my better-off days. An', Mary, you—you'm so good—do 'ee say a little prayer for me, t'-night. I seem to feel as if 'twould bring me luck. Will ee say wan?"

"Yes, dearie, of course I will," returned Mary, in rather broken accents, patting, in a motherly way, the pretty brown hand that lay in her own; "but you mustn't leave such things as prayers to me, you know—you must say them for yourself."

"Iss, o' course. But sometimes I feel as if they'm not heard, an' I know yours would be, 'cos you'm so good."

"Oh, I'm not good, Jenny—you mustn't think so."

"Iss, you be. But us woan't talk o' mis'erable things eny more—us 'ull talk o' t' weddin'. I do hope 'twill be fine, to-morrer. 'Tis gen'rally bright after being so dull, an' I do so love t' sunshine!"

"It's not so very bad, to-day," said Mary, cheerfully, "and I daresay it will be sunny, to-morrow."

"I hope 'twill, anyway. Be 'ee goin' to put these bits o' lace on your dress, Mary?—t' looks rare and nice—a'most as nice as mine. You 'ull cut me out if I doan't ta' care!"

And both girls, inwardly resolving to have nothing more to do with sad words and gloomy reflections, chattered cheerfully for half-an-hour or so—comparing notes as to the merits of their respective dresses; and when Jenny, at last, took her departure to make her final arrangements for the morrow, all traces of her recent emotion had passed away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WEDDING MORN.

IN spite of everyone's hopes and predictions, it was not by any means a charming morning—that which was to witness the marriage of Tom Penrose and Jenny Caerden. In truth, the weather was still oppressively dull and dreary. There had been some heavy rain during the night, but, save for a light and

passing shower, there was little to complain of on this score. Still, the sky was overcast and sullen. An ill-conditioned breeze swept through the village High Street now and again—giving a vicious twist to the vane on the spire of St. Margaret's Church, banging about the swinging signboards of the two inns, and playing wicked tricks with every object too weak to resist its malice.

A temporary caretaker for Jenny's troop of younger brothers and sisters had been found in a poor and elderly village dame—Mrs. Stanford, of the "general" shop, having daringly agreed to take upon herself the responsibilities of step-mother to them, later on. So the bride, being at liberty to spend her last morning in her old home undisturbed by domestic duties, had arranged to take her breakfast in the dignified privacy of her own chamber.

She had risen in the grey dawn to ascertain the state of the weather, and with some idea of leisurely commencing the important process of dressing; but on drawing aside her not too-tidy window-curtains, she crept shivering back to bed, chilled and vexed by the churlishness of the outlook.

Jenny was not naturally lachrymose—in fact, she rather held in scorn those of her female acquaintances who were ready to weep on the smallest provocation; but her nerves had been more tried during the past two months than even she herself was aware of, and as she lay back on the comfortless pillows and gazed up at the lowering sky, she had some difficulty in keeping the tears from her eyes. But for a bride to weep on her marriage-morn was, she firmly believed, to jeopardize her future happiness, and so she resolutely winked the rising drops away.

She was no longer distressed by the passionate regrets of the previous day—they were all put aside and done with; but she was strangely low-spirited and inert.

She had always meant to be the gayest of brides—merry, chatty, and laughing, and she was not a little surprised by her unexpected depression. Still, she had no intention of laying herself open to the condolence of friends, by any show of melancholy. She was far more desirous of winning envy than pity, and by time she had brushed out her beautiful dark hair and had coiled it up in its most becoming style, she was feeling more

cheerful, and was beginning to experience her wonted sense of pleasure in the adornment of her natural charms.

Yet it was a pale and sober face that met Mary Seaton's gaze as she came smiling in, to help put the finishing touches to the bride's toilet. But to be pale and subdued on one's wedding-day was to be only as one should be, according to gentle Mary's somewhat puritanical notions, and she highly approved both of Jenny's bearing and appearance. She would have liked to see a softer and more contented look on her friend's face, but after the revelation made to her on the previous day, softness and contentedness of expression was, she knew, scarcely to be expected; and when the grey silk dress, and a tiny white bonnet, were arranged to perfection, all other feelings gave place to honest admiration.

"Oh, Jenny, dear, you do look so pretty," she said, kissing the bride, tenderly. "The miller *will* be proud of you!"

"Un ought to, 't eny rate," responded Jenny, turning her dark eyes to the little cracked looking-glass hanging on the wall.

"You don't seem to have eaten much of your breakfast," said Mary, ignoring the note of scorn in the girl's voice. "You oughtn't to go to church without taking something. Let me run down and get you a fresh cup of tea and some nice thin bread and butter?"

"No, I doan't want eny, Mary. T' mis'able weather's took away my appetite—'tis ernuf to vex a saint, to see it lookin' so glum!"

"Oh, it doesn't seem half so bad outside," declared Mary, cheerily. "The rain seems to have cleared right off, and the wind has blown the street pretty dry. It would have been a real misfortune if we'd had to go to church under umbrellas."

"Yes, so 'twould," assented Jenny. "But I wanted to see it bright an' sunny—'twould ha' bin a good omin."

"I don't believe the weather has anything to do with omens, good or bad," laughed Mary. "But don't you think it's time you went down? You are quite ready, ain't you?"

"Yes, I'm ready; but ha' all t' folks come, yet? They'm makin' a rare talkin', but I doan't want to go down till they'm all here. Us ha' got to be to church by 'leven er'clock, but 'tisn't much after ten, yet awhiles."

"No; it is quite early, and we needn't go down till the last minute. It won't take a quarter-of-an-hour to walk up to church even if we're ever so slow."

"I want to go slow, so as all t' neiglabours can see us," said Jenny. "But lors, Mary," peeping through the window-curtains, "do'ee come an' look here. There's Mrs. Taptun in her purple silk an' a new bonnet to match. My! her do look gran'. Awh, an' here comes t' widder Stanford, leanin' on faather's arm. Her's got her last summer's bonnet on, done up wi' scarlet—cos her face isn't red ernuf a'ready, I s'pose! But her's a good sawl, an' I'm rael glad her's goin' to wed faather, byme-by, an' ta' care o' t' chil'ren."

"She is a good soul," agreed Mary. "It's pleasant for you to know that she'll make your father and the children comfortable, when you've got other duties to do."

"Waal, Mary," turning away from the window, "I s'pose us may as waal go down. I ha' n't seen t' miller come alongs yet, but p'r'aps un's here, a'ready. T' parler must be gitten' rare an' full by now."

And this was indeed the case—"t' parler," an apartment which had always served Jenny for kitchen and living-room, being not only full, but running over. For fashion and custom were things that generally gave place to convenience in Treverdale, and it had been arranged that the wedding guests should first assemble at the bride's house, accompany her to church, and then proceed to the Mill House—there to partake of such cheer as the bridegroom should have provided for them.

For, in Mr. Caerden's poor home, there was not sufficient space to accommodate more than half-a-dozen grown persons at one sitting; so the miller, determined to "do the thing in style," had once more prepared his big kitchen for the reception of company, and there the guests were to re-assemble, when the marriage ceremony should be completed.

At present, however, these same guests were experiencing some difficulty in finding standing-room in the cottage parlour. But they were all in good humour—laughing, chatting, and making merry; and when the bride, closely followed by Mary, appeared amongst them, she was greeted by a hearty burst of approving acclamation.

Never had she looked so fair—never had she been so calmly quiet and composed.

“ There was a soft and pensive grace,
A cast of thought upon her face,”

and her friends were unstinted in their expressions of admiration.

But the miller's advent—for he had not yet arrived—was the signal for another burst of applause, and this over, the company began arranging themselves for the procession to the church.

Accelerating his movements by aid of his late grandfather's best silver-headed cane, the miller—his long, sallow face flushed and his small, light eyes twinkling, from nervous excitement—limped up to Jenny and, presenting his arm with as gallant an air as he was able, in his state of trepidation, to assume, he led her off as if it were quite the usual and proper course of proceeding on such occasions. The others, too, evidently of his way of thinking, followed close on his heels—Will Ashdown, with Mary Seaton, Mr. Caerden with the Widow Stanford, and the rest, having paired as fancy prompted them, falling in behind.

(To be concluded.)

BELGRAVIA.

OCTOBER, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By ~~MRS.~~ ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

"PARIS AGAIN."

THE lengthening days and increasing, though cold brightness of early spring, found May still tranquil and content, though her life would have been intolerably monotonous had it not been for Ogilvie's visits, and the occasional treat of expeditions to the theatre or to interesting places in the neighbourhood of London which he gave her and himself, and which she enjoyed with an intensity that perhaps nothing in after life could ever bring. Indeed Ogilvie was almost amused at his own pleasure in these innocent diversions, for most innocent they were, though he probably knew it was the slow but steadily burning hidden fire beneath the surface that gave the glow, the subtle charm, to the atmosphere which enfolded them; that beyond the quiet harmony of their delightful confidential intercourse, there was more to win, closer links to forge, and that every day added to the power he was gaining over a singularly delicate tender spirit which was not without a certain strain of steely strength. This last he at times dimly perceived, and it gave just the touch of uncertainty to the game he was playing that lent it keener zest.

But the rapidly increasing amount of business and social duty

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to which he was obliged to attend as Easter approached interfered a good deal with the simpler pleasures he infinitely preferred. Ogilvie was not the man, however, to lose substance for shadow, and he knew himself too well to suppose that any amount of tenderness or passion could ever take the place of ambition in his life, and he never relaxed his hold of the wires he pulled with patient dexterity.

"What a long time it is since you were here!" exclaimed May one evening. He had come in late in the afternoon to see how matters were going on in Granby Road.

"You may believe I wanted to come quite as much as you can have wished for me," he returned with a quiet earnestness that was thoroughly convincing. "Have you been in any trouble?"

"No; but I had this letter from dear Madame Falk, and I would not speak to Miss Macallan until I consulted you."

"You are a most considerate ward! Look at me, May! Are you quite well? You seem paler than when I last saw you."

"Oh, yes! I am perfectly well," said May, the soft colour rapidly replacing her pallor under the steadfast gaze of his penetrating eyes. "I am well and happy; of course it is not very enlivening a continued *tête-à-tête* with Miss Macallan, though she is very good. Now, pray read the letter," she added for she wished him to avert his eyes.

He glanced through the large, strong writing which covered the page, his brow contracting as he did so. The letter had been written just before Madame Falk's discovery of Carr's relationship to her, and was a brief but pressing invitation to May to spend her Easter holidays with the writer. "I suppose Miss Macallan will give you a week or two at Easter, as every one has a holiday then, and we shall be so glad to see you. Mademoiselle Perret was here to-day, and her joy was great when I told her we hoped you would pay us a little visit."

"You have not said anything to my cousin about this invitation?" said Ogilvie, folding up the letter and handing it back to May.

"No. I wanted to tell *you* first."

"Would you like to go?"

"Yes, immensely! I love Madame Falk, and that house is the only approach to home I ever knew. Then, I have saved quite

enough money to pay for my journey," she added, blushing slightly.

"In short you are a millionaire," said Ogilvie with a caressing smile, though remembering certain items of news in a letter of Madame Zavadoskor's received that morning, he resolved she should not go. "Well, you had better speak to Miss Macallan, but if she objects, take my advice, do not urge it; she is, as you know, crotchety, and for the present, though her house is not a paradisaical abode, it is as well to stay here, though I hope to find you a happier home later on."

"But, Mr. Ogilvie, she does not want me in the least; I am quite ashamed to take her money, I do so little."

"You do quite enough; your presence every day is worth a good deal."

"Thank you," said May, a little confused.

"Still, if you wish to go—— Suppose I speak to her?"

"Oh, if you would! I should be so much obliged; she always does what you ask."

"Not always, I assure you, but I will try my best; and pray what am I to do without my wise little counsellor and confidante?"

"Don't laugh at me in that disrespectful way, Mr. Ogilvie! You will be too busy for the next—oh, I do not know how many months—to benefit by my wisdom."

"I shall manage to bask in its rays occasionally," he returned. "By the way," taking out his memorandum book, "what is to be done on Saturday? Ah! I think I can get out of this; it is an elaborate pleasure party, and I must reluctantly resign it on account of 'urgent private affairs,' extremely urgent, May? Then if fine, I will come here for you early, ten o'clock, and we'll run down to Hatfield and have a ramble in the park—it is a delicious place. The family is abroad, and we'll not run against tiresome acquaintances. The weather seems rather settled, if it ever is in this climate. If not, we'll find some substitute for our open-air excursion. Shall you like to come?"

"It will be quite delightful," cried May, lifting her eyes to his with so joyous a look that Ogilvie made a slight movement towards her which he instantly checked.

"Is Miss Macallan at home?" he asked.

"I think she must be," said May; "she went out shopping and

is no doubt deeply engaged recording her extravagances in the dining-room."

"I shall look in and speak to her as I go past," replied Ogilvie. "If she is stubborn, don't mind, I shall see that you have a holiday later." He rose as he spoke. "I must leave you now, May. Let me have a line to say how you and my kinswoman settle the question of the Easter holidays. Good-bye and pray for a fine Saturday!"

"You may be sure I will." Though May felt as bright as though she had bathed in a sea of summer sunshine she thought it wiser not to broach the subject of her leave of absence that evening, fancying that Miss Macallan looked extra severe. Next morning, however, after breakfast and prayers she began:

"I have had an invitation from my dear friend Madame Falk to spend a week or two with her in Paris at Easter. If you could spare me, I should very much like to accept."

"Well," returned Miss Macallan, "that's just what I can't do. The week after your papistical Easter I intend to have my Spring cleaning, and as I always look after it myself and it is just the thing you can help me in—No—Miss Riddell! There is reason in everything—and Easter is just the time I *cannot* spare you. Mr. Ogilvie has been at me already (I suppose *you* put him up to it), but I am not going to give way, so you needn't expect it!"

"Certainly I shall not, Miss Macallan, if you imagine you want me!" said May much annoyed. "Of course I shall give up the idea!"

"That's right," returned Miss Macallan. "I don't say but on another occasion I can spare you. When people go out into the world to earn their bread, they cannot expect to get holidays for the asking—can they?"

"No—certainly not." May felt a little hurt and choky. How intolerable Miss Macallan would be if Ogilvie did not keep her in order. Silence ensued, and at the end of a few minutes Miss Macallan observed quite pleasantly:

"They are having a bankrupt sale at Barker's to-morrow, and the two following days. There's a lot of thin black stuffs and jets and ribbons which I think might be useful to you. If you like, I'll go with you to-morrow and help you buy—for I don't fancy you are much of a hand at a bargain."

"Thank you, Miss Macallan—you are very good—but I want to keep my buying for Paris. I understand shopping much better there."

"Oh, then you intend going to Paris, anyhow?"

"Yes. Later, whenever you can spare me."

"Humph!" said Miss Macallan. "Now please enter the items I have scribbled on this scrap of paper in the general book, and tot them up." So May was launched on the routine of the day. As her avocations were not numerous, she easily managed to write a dolorous epistle to Madame Falk recording the cruel refusal of her adamantine employer.

For the next two days May still smarted under the pangs of disappointment, but Saturday was an ideal Spring day—the south-west wind blew softly—the expedition to Hatfield was supremely successful—and Ogilvie charmingly sympathetic in his condemnation of Miss Macallan's obduracy.

But May waited a considerable time for a reply to her letter, and at last grew a little uneasy at the continued silence of her good friends in the Rue de Vielle Cour. Meantime, Easter drew near—and many of Ogilvie's associates both in work and play went out of town. He felt peculiarly industrious, and, to the admiration of the head of his department, offered to remain in town.

He had from time to time given May French papers, treating of commercial subjects, to translate—and some on which she was engaged were rather complicated and required his assistance and inspection—so that his visits were more frequent during this holiday time. In this pleasant and absorbing occupation May's uneasiness was partly forgotten; moreover, Ogilvie confided to her his anxiety to quit his present service, which he felt was rather a narrow sphere, and devote himself to a parliamentary career, but for a not unusual obstacle—want of sufficient means. It was delightful to be thus trusted, and she listened entranced to his more serious talk, to which she responded with an amount of comprehension which rather surprised him. These happy days did not last long, however. The brief breathing-space of the recess over, everyone rushed back to work with fresh energy—all except Ogilvie's chief, Lord S—, who had taken a chill and was laid up in his country house, where he summoned his favourite employé with some urgency.

The same evening that Ogilvie left Town, May received a letter from Miss Barton. It was short but effective.

"My cousin I am sorry to say has had a sharp feverish attack which is the reason neither of your last letters have been answered. The great upset we have had was too much for her nerves, but she is coming round again, and is most anxious to see you. Try and come as soon as you can, I believe it would do her a world of good to have you with her. Come at once."

This summons set May's heart beating, and her brain working. It was impossible to say no to it. First it filled her heart with pleasure to think she was so dear to Madame Falk towards whom she felt almost a daughter's affection—then to see her old home again (albeit the memories connected with it were not altogether sweet) and bright, beautiful Paris, was a great attraction—finally to be a week or ten days out of sight and hearing of Miss Macallan was a relief not to be despised. It was curious how very distasteful that respectable spinster was to her young "companion"; there was an antagonism of nature between them—and this is generally unconquerable. She felt the intense materialism of the woman a perpetual offence—per contra there was a strong reluctance both in her heart and mind to displease Ogilvie—and that he would be greatly displeased she felt sure—though quite unable to answer the question why. Still he had never opposed her project of paying her friends a visit, and eager as she was to please her guardian, she was by no means inclined to resign the right of free action into his hands; she would enclose him Miss Barton's letter with a few lines from herself when she had spoken to Miss Macallan.

"Will you read this letter," she said, presenting it to her employer when she descended to "prayers," for she had retired to cogitate over what was best to be done when she had glanced over Miss Barton's epistle.

"Eh!" said Miss Macallan, putting on her glasses. "What queer-like writing!" She seemed an age reading it through.

"They seem very keen to have you," was her comment as she handed the letter back to its owner.

"Not more than I am to go," returned May with a persuasive

smile, "so, now that the cleaning is over and I shall have no more music lessons for some time, I hope you will not object to my taking a short holiday?"

"I am no that sure about it! I do not think Mr. Ogilvie will be very well pleased! Stay till you hear what he says."

"That would only cause needless delay—and I should like to start to-morrow evening. Mr. Ogilvie never objected to my going, Miss Macallan! It was because you wanted me the visit was postponed."

"Hum!—yes, to be sure I forgot; still you had better wait a letter from him."

"I am quite sure he will see I ought to go," urged May. "He knows Madame Falk was like a mother to me! He is quite fond of her himself, and I will write and explain everything to him."

"Oh, very well! go your own ways, but mind, I warned you you'd vex your guardian, and few girls have one like him; he'll maybe be angered against me for letting you go."

"Not if you did not want me on your own account! Do you want me, Miss Macallan?"

"Well, no—not particularly."

"I shall return within a fortnight, and I do so want to go," pleaded May.

"Look here, my dearie," said Miss Macallan earnestly, "tell me truth—have you a laddie in Paris, that you are so set upon going?"

"A laddie?" repeated May, puzzled for a moment. "Oh, you mean 'a young man,' in the servant-girl sense. No, indeed, neither in Paris nor anywhere else. No one ever took a fancy to me, and I am sure I never dreamed of taking a fancy to any one; I do not think I am the kind of girl men care for, women are always very good to me."

Miss Macallan laughed a short, disagreeable laugh.

"That's something like myself. It's curious, maybe, but I never had a sweetheart, not that I hold with such-like trash."

"Well, I can assure you, Miss Macallan, I do not think I have even a speaking acquaintance with any man in Paris now."

"Not the young man (and a fine young man he was) that called here some time past?"

"I do not think he is in Paris, he was going to Egypt or

somewhere. So you have really no objection on your own account to my taking my holiday now?"

"I cannot say I have, but you'll anger Mr. Ogilvie."

"Why should I?" and then without waiting for a reply she went on. "Then I shall leave to-morrow evening, and travel by the Dieppe route, it is the cheapest. If you have any commissions I shall be delighted to do them for you, everyone wants things from Paris."

"Thank you"—drily—"London is good enough for me. Will you ring the bell, and we'll have our portion of Scripture. There's no use talking any more about the matter."

With what joy May ran up to her room and lighted one of the candles with which she always provided herself, for Miss Macallan had a "couvre feu" of her own at ten o'clock, when the gas was turned off and the house left to darkness.

Before she slept, May indited a note to Ogilvie, telling him her reasons for starting at once and enclosing Miss Barton's letter; she promised to write immediately from Paris, and to return within a fortnight. Then she penned a card to the Rue Vielle Cour, and having thus cleared away her necessary writing, she had the morrow free for packing and repairs.

Miss Macallan was passive and silent on the following day. There was even a tinge of uneasiness in her look and manner, but she wished May a good journey at parting, omitting, however, to ask her Paris address.

It was something of an undertaking, this first journey quite, alone. On her travels to England in the preceding summer, May had been escorted to the steamer by Madame Falk, and met at the station by Ogilvie. How vividly she recalled that delightful and unexpected meeting. She had ample time for thought during the long hours of loneliness which intervened between Victoria and St. Lazare. It was almost startling to think of the close intimacy, the quiet confidence which had grown up between her and Ogilvie, whom she had once considered a formidable—almost a repellent personage—and now! A slight tremor passed through her veins at the idea of life without him. One of the charms of this—friendship—well, it was quite friendship on his side, and should never *seem* anything else on hers, was the degree of delicate secrecy which preserved it from ordinary observation. Could it always go on like this? She would

not look too far ahead, she dreaded she knew not what of vague unhappiness. Let her enjoy the present. She could not help dwelling on some of Miss Macallan's words; it was evident that she had no objection to her (May's) visit to Paris, but that the real obstacle was Ogilvie's disinclination to let her go. She recalled his offer to speak to Miss Macallan when the subject was first mooted—did he really ask for a holiday for her, or arrange with his kinswoman to put it off? She could not help knowing that Ogilvie, if resolved to accomplish any design, would be ready to carry it out at any cost! Then the question about a "young man," and the suggestion of Carr's possible presence in Paris, naturally recalled her guardian's ill-concealed anger at Carr's visit to her. Could this be jealousy? Her cheeks flamed at the idea, but she soon chased it away. Men were naturally jealous even in friendship; she would be careful not to be too friendly with Carr, and how earnestly she hoped he had gone to the ends of the earth, anywhere, so long as it was away from Paris.

May had unfortunately hit on one of the dates when the steamer is obliged to wait outside Dieppe for the tide, so it was past ten o'clock when she reached the *gare*; still she was not over tired. It was a bright, fresh morning, and she had been exhilarated by finding herself in France, by hearing the language which had long been more familiar to her than her own, while her eye was charmed by the picturesque, un-English look of people and things. Finally, with what joy she recognised the gaunt form and grey curls of Miss Barton, who was looking grimly over the heads of those crowding round the door, through which the passengers were to enter the waiting-room.

May never thought she could have embraced her somewhat contradictory old friend with so much effusion.

Miss Barton for once reciprocated heartily. May's small amount of luggage was quickly looked at, and she was promptly and energetically pushed into a *fiacre*.

"Well, May, you are looking wonderfully well, and somehow 'woke up.' Madame Falk will be delighted to have you with her again. We have a wonderful story to tell you—I dare not begin it now, and it is nothing bad! but don't you mention it to Esther. It is agreed that *I* am to have the telling!"

Thus Miss Barton as they rattled away, past the junction of

streets at St. Augustin where the fountains were playing, and the trees bordering the streets and boulevards already decked with their fresh green Spring attire. At eleven o'clock life is in full working order in Paris, the cafés were crowded, the trams and omnibuses full to overflowing.

"How bright and beautiful it all is!" exclaimed May, looking eagerly from the window as the *fiacre* turned into the Rue Boétie to gain the Faubourg St. Honoré. "I do not seem ever to have left it! And Madame Falk—is quite well again?"

"Not quite well, but recovering fast, and will, I hope, be better than ever she was. How is it that you managed to get away at once, eh?"

"Oh! I was promised a holiday, so I took it—Miss Macallan had really no objection, so here I am."

"Yes, here we are!" exclaimed Miss Barton as they turned into the Rue Vielle Cour, and I think we shall find Esther up and dressed—she has not got up till late for some little time."

Here the *fiacre* stopped at the well known *porte cochère*. May was out of the carriage in a moment, and was holding the concierge by the hand, then she returned and taking out her purse went to pay the driver.

"Nonsense!" cried Miss Barton "put that up! We think little of *fiacres* and *cochers* now-a-days."

Scarcely heeding this astounding speech, May flew upstairs. The moment she touched the bell the door was flung open and Adrienne with the privilege of an old friend was embracing her, "*Voilà Mademoiselle!*" she exclaimed, throwing open the door of the salon—the next instant May's arms were round her dear friend, and she was once more really at home. Then they drew back and looked at each other. May, struck with the indefinable change in Madame Falk, involuntarily exclaimed, "How pale and thin you look, dear," checking the words "What a sweet cap you have," which rose to her lips, as unsuitable to such a moment of emotion. Then she glanced at the profusion of flowers which beautified the room and was conscious of some indefinable change, and perceived that Carr was standing near the door and that she must have passed without seeing him. He seemed strangely at home, having evidently just risen from an arm-chair beside which an English newspaper had fallen. "Don't stand, dear. Madame Falk," she continued. "I feel you are trembling, that

is not like you, sit down again"—and she bent down to place a tabouret under her feet.

"Oh! I shall soon be myself, May—so glad to have you with me again, dear child! You do not look as if you had had a long journey."

"I do not feel as if I had had one. I *am* so glad to be with you again." Then turning to shake hands with Carr, she added "I had no idea you were in Paris!" She felt there was something peculiarly kind and friendly in his eyes.

"And I had no idea you were coming so soon or I should not have arranged to leave to-night. I am going to see the Conroys at St. Remo," he said—and May's ungrateful heart leaped for joy at the announcement. "But I hope to find you here on my return," he added, looking with a questioning glance into her eyes.

"I have a whole fortnight's leave of absence."

"A fortnight," he repeated. "Oh you are not going away in a fortnight—is she?" (to Madame Falk). "I say, Miss Riddell, how did you escape from Ogilvie?"

"I did not escape. He was away, so I took leave, but *he* would not have prevented me." Then she turned from him, and sitting down by Madame Falk took her hand, which she stroked gently. Never had they seen her so demonstrative before. The timid reserve that used to keep her silent and still seemed all melted and gone, and the real May, frank, loving and, in a way, fearless, was revealed.

"I have seen your things put in your room," said Miss Barton. "You had better come and take off your hat, for breakfast is ready."

May complied, greatly wondering. Carr had always been a welcome guest in the Rue Vielle Cour, especially to Miss Barton, but now he seemed thoroughly at home. He was going to stay to breakfast evidently, he, who was accustomed to all possible costly luxury. He looked unusually joyous and happy too. Was he going to marry Frances Conroy? and therefore received as a relative by Madame Falk? This probably was the story Miss Barton had to tell.

The breakfast was very pleasant. Madame Falk was unusually silent, but did not seem depressed, for she listened to all that was said with interest and laughed at the small jests that so easily

do duty for "bon mots" when hearts are light and tempers tranquil.

Breakfast too was very dainty, and the wine choice.

"You must take a long rest this afternoon," said Madame Falk to May.

"But Miss Riddell says she is not at all tired," put in Carr, "and it is so fine, suppose she and Miss Barton come for a drive in the Bois?"

Miss Barton screwed her face into a curious expression of "No."

"What! take her away from me the moment she has come?" said Madame Falk.

"If you take that view, I will say no more," returned Carr; "as I go off to-night I am naturally anxious to make hay while the sun shines. I wish I had not promised to go."

"Well you cannot disappoint Mrs. Conroy now," observed Madame Falk.

"No, of course not. I suppose you dine at seven as usual?"

"A little earlier if you like," put in Miss Barton.

"Oh, it will do quite well, my train does not go till nine forty-five." And he rose to fetch May some fruit from the side-board.

She had indeed noticed how he went to and fro during the meal, finding this and fetching that. He knew where everything was, and—it was altogether puzzling. May liked him better than she ever did before—he seemed younger than he used to be.

They lingered somewhat at table, and May's enquiries elicited that Mademoiselle Perret was doing very well and had not yet heard that May was coming—that the concierge's delicate son had won the first prize for freehand drawing—that Madame Zavadoskoi had been suddenly summoned from the gaieties of Parisian life to Florence, where her young daughter-in-law was dangerously ill—some ill-natured people said because she and her husband had had a desperate quarrel—that Madame Falk's nephew had got on remarkably well, and began to speak French so fluently that he was returning to London in the Autumn. Then many questions were put to her respecting her life with Miss Macallan—and there was a good deal of laughter over the quiet humour of May's descriptions.

At last Carr rose, lit a cigar, and said he had a few things to do—so departed, kissing Madame Falk's hand, May observed.

"Now," cried Miss Barton, "you must take your tonic, Esther, and lie down. May and I will go and unpack, and I shall see what frightful things she has brought from London."

"Not frightful at all," said May. "The shops there are charming!—you would find a great change I am sure. How long is it since you were there?"

"Rather more than twenty-five years," returned Miss Barton, who was measuring out Madame Falk's medicine, one eye shut to increase the intensity of her gaze with the other.

This accomplished, she watched her cousin take the potion and then followed her to her room, settled her on her sofa, covered her with an eiderdown, gave strict orders that no one was to be admitted, and led the way upstairs to a bed-room on the next floor, engaged for May.

"I have really very little to unpack," said the latter.

"I know that, it is not for *that* I brought you up here, but to unburden my own mind. I have a tremendous story to tell; sit down there." And Miss Barton began.

As she gradually unfolded her story May's large eyes dilated, and she clasped her hands tight—with rapt attention.

It was a thrilling tale, and May's heart beat as the picture delineated by the speaker unfolded itself before her quick imagination.

Such an episode of real life was infinitely astonishing and touching, above all, it promised peace and safety for dear Madame Falk's declining years.

"Of course," concluded Miss Barton, "I thought Esther would have jumped at him. Wouldn't you?"

"I am not sure," said May slowly. "He isn't a bit the dear child that was lost. I understand that, but she will grow into a motherly feeling for him when he is so nice to her," added May, pressing her handkerchief to her eyes. "I feel as if I could love him for his good feeling."

"The curious thing is," resumed Miss Barton, "that whenever Esther catches an expression in his face, a tone in his voice, that reminds her of that brute of a husband who destroyed her life, she is ready to hug him."

"Poor man, he must have been out of his mind."

"Maybe so," returned Miss Barton sternly, "but I'd give such madmen the cat, just to bring them to their senses."

"How impossible it is to know where his responsibility ended."

"Well, at any rate, the Conroys were enchanted. Mr. Conroy stopped here on his way to join his wife and daughter, and invited Bernard (we always call him Bernard) to come and see them at St. Remo. It is very nice for a young Australian man o' the woods to find himself first cousin to Mr. Herbert Conroy of Audeley Chase. What I regret is that Madame Zavadoskor was called away before I could tell her. She is so kind-hearted, so interested in us, that it would have pleased her immensely. I see though that Bernard (Mr. Carr) is bent on carrying his mother off to Australia. I don't fancy the idea. Come, my dear, let us go back to Esther. Don't you say more to her than that you are delighted, and think Bernard all that's good and delightful."

"So I do," said May.

CHAPTER XXII.

"FRESH FETTERS."

MAY was carefully obedient to Miss Barton's suggestion ; when they rejoined Madame Falk she kissed her tenderly, and whispered :

"Thank God, dear, you have found so charming a son, and some reward for all your goodness."

When Carr returned to dinner he asked Miss Barton significantly, "Have you told her?"

"Yes, everything," was her reply.

"Then congratulate me, Miss Riddell, on the 'Treasure Trove' I have found!" he cried, holding out his hand to her. "It's not every day that a fellow finds *such* a mother ready-made to his hand."

"Not every day that a mother finds a bright, warm-hearted son, after mourning him as lost," said May, frankly giving him hers, and looking up to him with admiring eyes.

"Ay, that's the mischief of it! It's hard for her to feel I *am* her son after all these years, but it will come——"

"I am sure it will. She cannot help loving you."

"Very nice to hear you say so," said Carr laughing, and May quite unembarrassed, laughed too.

"Am I not related to you somehow?" he asked.

"I am afraid I cannot claim relationship with you."

"No; though she may be my adopted daughter," said Madame Falk, entering the room at that moment.

"Then, by Jove, you shall be my adopted sister!" cried Carr joyously.

"Thank you. This is indeed an *embarras de richesses*," and they went to dinner, Carr giving his arm to Madame Falk.

May was interested to observe how carefully he attended to his mother's wants, and lavished all possible attention on her. It was evident how earnest he was to win her affection—to be to her a loving son—she was evidently yielding to his efforts to win her affection, but her nature was too strong, too honest, to be easily affected.

"You will give my best love to Mrs. Conroy and Frances," said May, when Carr observed that it was time for him to be going, "and beg her to let me know when they are to be in London, that I may see them as they pass through. It seems so long since I saw them."

"It will be uncommonly nice for Bernard" (she always called him Bernard from the first) "to have a charming cousin for a chum," said Miss Barton with a knowing nod.

"Only it happens I like her the least of the lot," he returned "I never feel at home with her."

"That is because you do not know her well enough," cried May. "She is most generous and high-minded—her worst fault is being too much in earnest. I have known her for years, and have a right to speak."

"I daresay she is all that, but she is scarcely human enough for a low-minded fellow like me. I hope I shall find you here when I came back. Good-bye, Miss Riddell. Good-bye, Miss Barton. I feel I ought to call you Aunt, then my circle of female relatives would be complete"—a slight pause—"Mother dear, good-bye; make haste and get quite strong." He kissed her tenderly, and went away, turning at the door to wave his hand to all.

"Dear Madame Falk, how nice and kind and natural he is," cried May impulsively. "I am so glad you have found him."

"Rather that he has found me. I am ashamed to be so slow in giving him my heart, but he is good, and deserves my gratitude."

"I see a strong likeness to you at times, in expression, not features," continued May.

"That never struck you before," said Madame Falk, laughing.

* * * * *

Perhaps Carr's greatest merit in May's eyes on that particular occasion was that his departure coincided with her own arrival. It was most satisfactory to be able to record that fact in the letter she wrote to Ogilvie describing her prosperous journey and happy meeting with Madame Falk and her cousin.

"I have a wonderful story to tell you about him when I return, but it is too long for a letter," she concluded, adding that she should not trouble him with another until she was able to name the date at which she would be in London.

It was very delightful to think when she woke that she would see the kind, familiar faces of her old friends as soon as she left her room, and as she dressed May looked back over the old days passed with her father; she wished he had not been so dissatisfied with his career—with the world in general. Had he been happier, he would have been more sympathetic. She feared she was impatient, not forbearing and kind enough to him, and a sigh would swell her bosom, as she remembered how often a feeling of utter loneliness had chilled her when his incidental acts or words showed her how unimportant she was in his sight. Then, as ever when she recalled the past, life seemed to have begun for her from the day she knew Ogilvie; she was so held down by the sense of her own insignificance, by her unattractive inferiority, that she had closed her heart and mind against everyone, as the only safeguard of her self-respect, when the gentle warmth of Ogilvie's notice and appreciation seemed to create for her a new heaven and a new earth, to touch her intellect and heart alike with the fructifying electricity of comprehension and sympathy. From that time forward she began to have faith in herself, to feel something of a woman's dignity instead of the sorrowful helplessness of an incompetent child. How could she help the kind of devotion she felt towards the man who was her mental maker, who had helped her to develop the strength which she now used to oppose him; for though she would not

admit it to the adamantine Euphemia, she knew Ogilvie would have prevented her visit to Paris if he could.

Here she was, however, and she must make it up with him as best she could ; she had done nothing wrong.

Madame Falk had not risen when May went down, but she was looking better, as if refreshed by a good night. Miss Barton was walking about with a duster as usual, but this was mere form, for the cousins had a second servant now, and Miss Barton averred that the two together were more trouble than they were worth.

"Well, May, did you sleep—are you rested?"

"Quite so, Miss Barton. Nor did I dream of the wonderful fairyland into which your story plunged me yesterday. Surely the realms of romance never presented a more extraordinary story of re-union."

"I rather think rarely! It is, however (and thank God), a very satisfactory reality, only I see Bernard will take his mother off to Australia, and I don't see what is to become of *me*! Even if I had a fortune to live upon here—which I haven't—it is no joke to part with such a companion as Esther has been! But I say nothing. Besides, it would make Bernard seem rather ridiculous if he imported a superfluous old woman like me."

"And will Madame Falk like to go to the other side of the world?"

"I do not know—she is greatly changed. The sudden shock of Bernard's appearing, the revival of the old grief, and chiefly the unexpected ease in money matters (her son is now arranging a large settlement on her that she may be quite independent), seems to have taken the strength out of her! You know that for many a year she daren't relax, lest grim poverty might get the best of it; now that is over she feels a sort of collapse. But never mind, plenty of money never hurt anyone, unless indeed it were a man inclined to drink and gamble. Esther will get used to it all, you'll see. I am longing to see Madame Zavadskor, and tell her all about everything. She is going to England this year, I think. I am sorry she is away now you have come over."

May was not, but she kept that to herself. For some occult reason May did not like the charming Russian, perhaps because she was instinctively convinced that Madame Zavadskor was a

masked enemy in spite of her soft civility, her condescending notice.

As soon as she thought Mademoiselle Perret's disengaged midday hour had come, May set out for the Rue C——; she had heard a good report of her little musical friend's improved position. Her lessons were numerous, her classes well attended, she had a new and improved *concierge*, in fact, as is often the case, one small success had brought many.

Mademoiselle had just finished her well-earned breakfast, and when, at May's ring, she opened the door and saw who was waiting for admission she gave a scream of delight.

"My little angel," she exclaimed. "My poor, dear child! How did you come? Can you not endure the sadness of that sombre country any longer. Come in, come in. Have you breakfasted—Yes! Ah, you should have come to me first."

She embraced her young favourite many times, insisted on removing her hat to see how she looked, and poured forth a torrent of questions, most of which she answered herself.

"Ah, then you have not come to remain—Dieu! How is that? You are not tied for ever to that millwheel, where you must weary yourself to death," she said, when May explained that she had only come for a brief holiday. "Madame Falk will never let you go back—Madame is a millionaire now! Figure to yourself what a romance, and such a tall, handsome man to come back to her out of the sea instead of the little fair-haired baby she lost, and, listen! I have the profoundest regard for our dear friend, she seems almost French in her delightful manner and *politesse*, but she is English—English to the ends of her fingers! Imagine! in place of throwing herself into the arms of this beautiful young son, she hesitates, she demands proofs, she weeps, she thinks he does not replace the little baby-boy. Ah! Dieu! What extraordinary people you are! She leaves him knocking at the door of her heart, and finally only opens it an inch at a time to the poor, dear, adoring son who only asks for her love! It is inconceivable! absolutely inconceivable! And he loads her with gifts!"

"Oh! Madame Falk is growing very fond of him, and it is delightful to see how happy he looks."

"Naturally, when he has found so charming a mother; and you, my little one, you will remain permanently with our dear

Madame Falk. You will not return to the melancholy house of the rich *mees* ?”

“I must, mademoiselle. I have only a short holiday, and though I believe Madame Falk would readily give me shelter, I must work for myself.”

“Bah! what is a bagatelle such as you would cost compared to the pleasure of having a daughter like you—for you would be a daughter, and they are rich—very rich!”

“I have no claim on them or on anyone,” said May, with a sigh.

“Listen then, my child. If you would really prefer making your own existence to living in luxurious repose, come and join me. I could do with more help. You have had lessons, you have studied in London, they tell me, but I fear the teaching there is of small use!”

“My master was an Italian,” returned May smiling.

“Ah! good, good! Well then you could give me great help, and we would extend our business. You should have your pension with me, and a little something for clothes and pocket. Hey! how say you? It would make me very happy.”

“And I should be happy with you—but dear Mademoiselle, I can undertake nothing at present—I must return to London before I do anything.”

“Ah, it is a pity!” sighed Mademoiselle Perret, her dark eager face clouding over. “But apparently you are not unhappy in that serious country. You look well, but very well. You have developed a figure—your air is more gracious.” Then followed a string of questions, and before May could answer half of them Mademoiselle glanced at the clock. “I go, my sweet child, I must fly. I shall be late for the beautiful American of the Boulevard Hausmann—and Madame her mother sits with her watch in her hand counting the seconds till I come—also while I stay.”

“Then I will leave, dear good friend, but first, Madame Falk’s message. She desires her love and hopes you will dine with her to-day. Just a *partie carrée*, no gentlemen.”

“Ah, with the greatest pleasure! We shall tell each other everything. My best thanks; I shall be punctual *ma belle*, *au revoir*—I must fly.”

“Everyone is very good,” mused May as she walked slowly

back, "and Paris is lovely—I feel more at home here than London—but—" her thoughts grew vague as she felt, not without a prophetic sense of uneasiness, how intolerable the loveliest place on earth would be if she were cut off from Ogilvie's presence. Believing implicitly as she did in the loyal constancy of his friendship, she could not help feeling that her happiness hung on a thread—a very frail thread. The waves of life, that often stormy sea, might sweep them apart at any moment—there was no tie of kinship, no claim of any kind on one side or the other, and though she could not help perceiving, in spite of Ogilvie's caution and rare self-control, that it was a source of profound delight to be with her, she never allowed herself to doubt that she was secondary to his ambition, to his schemes for the future. Her reflections, however, ended as they generally did—in a firm determination to enjoy the present, and let the future take care of itself.

The remainder of her holiday was most agreeably spent. Madame Falk rapidly improved in health, and they drove out almost every day in the Bois, and in the charming environs of Paris.

Madame Falk even began to do a little work, and when her cousin remonstrated with her replied that there was nothing so exhausting as idleness.

"Do you know, May, I think I shall try to train *you* in journalism! I know you hate idleness and dependence as much as I do myself, suppose you try to slip into my place?"

"I should like it very much," said May, "but to do your work I should have to live in Paris.

"Why not? You have not adopted London as your dwelling-place for ever and a day?"

"No," returned May, colouring, "but I cannot leave it yet. I must stay and save up a little."

"My dear, your only chance is to stay and take up the running *now!*"

"You must see what you can make of me during the next ten days, and, if I seem promising, why, we will think seriously of the idea, but I fear—I fear I should never be equal to such a task!"

"I do not see why you should not be, but as you say you must try."

"In any case I must return to London and consult my guardian," was May's ultimatum.

"Don't call him your guardian," cried Miss Barton, who assisted at this discussion; "that is all nonsense, and affectation, and tends to sentimentality. He is just a useful friend, and of course you are right to tell him your plans, but he has no right to interfere with them."

"He has been so wonderfully kind and helpful to me that it would be most ungrateful of me to do anything without consulting him," said May gravely. "Besides being an excellent adviser—he knows everything."

"Oh, no doubt he is very capable and has been very good to you," observed Madame Falk. "I would certainly mention my suggestion to him if I were you; you could write it, you know."

"Mr. Ogilvie has not answered the letter I sent from this, and I trouble him with as few as possible, but I shall certainly talk to him about your scheme when I go back."

"It is evident you are determined to return," said Miss Barton with a sniff.

"I must," replied May steadily.

"Come then, give me my note-book, I have jotted down a few bits about books and authors, it is all I can do now; you read them over, and see if you can put them into readable form. To-morrow we will take some notes in the Bois, and you shall try to record them."

"Yes, dear Madame Falk. I shall be very glad to make the attempt."

A day or two after this discussion came the letter from Ogilvie for which May had begun to pine. It was cool and short, so were almost all his communications, but this one especially. He had been a good deal surprised to find she had taken such a sudden flight to Paris, and feared that a lonely journey was rather a high price to pay for a holiday. He had been to see Miss Macallan, who hoped May would return at the appointed time, for she (Miss Mac) missed her much. "Let me know the exact date of your return," he concluded, "and if you have heard lately from the Conroys."

There was something in the tone of this letter which wounded May—a tinge of indifference. If Ogilvie was really displeased with her and withdrew the delightful confidence—the veiled

tenderness—he had hitherto shown her—how was she to live? She was half-frightened at the intense pang of such an anticipation—and she began to long for a glimpse of his face, where, at a glance, she could perceive his mood.

As he asked for information, she lost no time in giving it, adding a question that gave him a curious thrill. “Are you really displeased with me?” He resisted his strong temptation to write to her by return, and resolutely kept her waiting for three days before she received the following lines:

“Yes, I am quite furious—and have stored up, ready to be delivered on your return, the most immense scolding you have ever received from your sincere friend—PIERS OGILVIE.”

A threat which had the remarkable effect of restoring light to May's eyes, and smiles to her lip.

The remainder of May's holiday was all pleasure, but the best day of all was the day she said good-bye to her faithful friends, and set her face Londonwards. During the week which followed the letter, which contained what she saw meant plenary absolution from Ogilvie, there had been more than one letter from Carr, who seemed to be enjoying himself very much, and was delighted with the cordial reception given to him by his new relatives. Frances had undertaken his literary and philosophical education, and expressed a wish to visit him in Australia if his mother went out there. He had partly promised to visit them early in the summers, when they expected Madame Zavadoskor, and they hoped Madame Falk would join them also. He always enquired kindly for May, and enjoined his mother to prevent her return to London. But all attempts to carry out this injunction failed.

* * * * *

Though later in the season, May had a less tranquil passage than when she crossed before, and she felt a good deal fatigued on reaching Granby Road.

Miss Macallan seemed more “dour,” more cast-iron than ever, the dining-room grimmer and barer; but the young servant seemed right glad to have her back, and even Miss Macallan deigned to say she was not sorry the holiday was over.

“Ye see, you've just got me into the bad habit of having all my

notes and bits o' writing done for me, and you must just stay at home and do the work you have undertaken for many months to come."

"Very well, Miss Macallan," returned May, good-humouredly.

"Here's a note from Mr. Ogilvie for you. I can tell you he wasn't very well pleased at your going off in that sudden, unforeseen sort of way."

"I am afraid he was not," said May, dying to get away and read her note by herself.

"Aye, and I think it right to tell you he is going to give you a very serious talking to, but he is uncommon considerate, for he says it would be too hard on you to have *such* a talking to before a third person, so I have just told Jessie to show him up to the drawing-room whenever he comes. It's fine and warm now, and you'll no need a fire. My word May; but you are a fortunate lassie to be so cared for and thought about by a man that will, may be—be Prime Minister o' England one of these days, for, if he goes into Parliament——"

An expressive pause indicated that no words were adequate to tell the height to which he might attain.

"Believe me, I am very grateful," said May quietly, "and I hope when I have had my punishment, I may be forgiven."

"Of that I have no doubt. And I hope you'll lay the lesson to heart."

When May retreated to her room and opened her letter she found it contained a few lines, in which Ogilvie said that he was greatly pressed with work, but would contrive to run up and see her that evening, perhaps about seven. If he did not appear she must set his absence down to unavoidable business.

Feeling tired and restless, May thought she would try what sleep would do to restore her.

Glancing round the cold, unlovely room, as she let down the blinds to ensure partial darkness, she thought how dreadful it would be to return to such an abode if there was no friend like Ogilvie there to lean upon! The prospect of seeing him made her heart beat, and she feared would prevent her obtaining the rest she sought; but the fatigue of healthy youth provides for its own recuperation, and sleep stole caressingly over her, while she still feared it would not come. Then she knew no more till Agatha's voice roused her, saying:

"If you please, miss, dinner will be ready in ten minutes."

"What, so soon!" cried May, startled. "Oh, I shall make all possible haste." She rose, feeling greatly refreshed, and found Miss Macallan in an amiable mood, and desirous of some information respecting the French Protestant Ministers. What were their views as to "free will" and "predestination," and what might their salaries be? On these topics they managed a very fair amount of conversation.

In the afternoon Miss Macallan went to take tea with the Scotch Minister's wife, the nearest approach to an intimate friend she possessed.

May unpacked her box and arranged her belongings, putting on a pretty gauzy black dress, of which Madame had made her a present, and tied up her rich golden-brown hair with some black ribbon in the latest Parisian-style. As seven o'clock approached she grew more and more nervous. Of course, he might not come at all, but—she felt as if she could not bear such a disappointment. So she would hope to the last; and it was not quite seven yet.

A knock at her door.

"Mr. Ogilvie is in the drawing-room, miss," said Agatha.

The next moment her hand was on the lock of the drawing-room door. She paused to collect herself, and then went in.

Ogilvie was standing in the middle of the room, and she was immediately struck with the worn look of his face, the light in his deep-set eyes.

He came forward and took May's hand, which she held out with a smile, in a close, warm grasp, laying his other hand over it; she tried to speak, but the words did not come. Ogilvie was silent, while he gazed at her as if he would gather some knowledge, some secret which he did not care to ask. May trembled, for she felt that she was in the presence of emotion sternly repressed, but none the less strong.

"May!" exclaimed Ogilvie, still keeping her hand, "you are trembling! What disturbs you?"

"I suppose I am frightened at the tremendous scolding you have stored up for me."

"Do you really think I could speak harshly to you?" he asked, slowly relaxing his hold. "I was startled at your independence; but I remembered I had virtually agreed to your visiting

Madame Falk—and—I have missed you more even than I expected, my sweet friend."

"It is very good of you to say so."

"Do not speak to me in conventional phrases, May. You know it is an infinite refreshment to me to come and talk to you, and feel the balm of your truthfulness." He stopped, drew his hand over his brow, then he laughed, and said in his more ordinary tone, "The fact is I have been rather overdone, and I have but a short time to stay. I wanted to see, with my own eyes, that you were safe, and within reach. Tell me, have you enjoyed yourself?"

"I will tell you everything, but do sit down, you are very tired," and she drew forward the easiest chair for him, and placed herself near. Yet their talk did not flow very freely. They did not seem to need many words, still Ogilvie soon heard all that was to be told of May's holiday.

"You are looking all the better for it," he said, "now that your colour has come back. You were so white when you came in, that you frightened me. Now as to your wonderful story, I think I have heard it. Madame Zavadoskor detailed it in a long letter I had from her this morning. She wrote from St. Remo, where Mr. Conroy told her the whole romance of young Carr's parentage. Now, May, I *must* go. You shall hear to-morrow, or next day, when I can steal an hour or two for a little glimpse of heavenly confidence. I dare not stay now. Good night, May. Remember, you are never to run away from me again."

(To be continued.)

Famous Poets.

III.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THERE is no more instructive chapter in the history of modern literature than that which illustrates the career of Oliver Goldsmith. He was born at a small old parsonage house in the lonely Irish village of Pallas, in the county of Longford, in Ireland, on the 10th of November, 1728.

He was the fifth among seven children of the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, who, without adequate means for the support of a family, having only forty pounds a year, had married, early in life, Anne, the daughter of the Rev. Oliver Jones, who was master of the school at Elphine, to which he had gone as a boy. "The Vicar of Wakefield," and the clergyman described in the "Deserted Village," are characters drawn by Goldsmith from the virtues and foibles of his own father.

When Oliver was two years old, his father succeeded to the living of his wife's uncle, which increased his income to two hundred a year, and the family moved to a respectable house and farm on the verge of the pretty little village of Lissoy, in the county of Westmeath.

The future poet was accounted a dull child; he was taught his letters by a dependent of the family, and she often spoke, in after years, of his stupidity; but his sister also relates that "he began to scribble verses when he could scarcely write, and showed a fondness for books and learning." At the age of six he was sent to the village school, which he has immortalized in verse, kept by Mr. Byrne, an old quarter-master in the wars of Queen Anne. He left that place without having acquired much learning, but it is thought that here some of his wandering habits were implanted in him, also a taste for song. It was at this school he contracted the small-pox, which nearly proved mortal, and left deep and indelible traces on his face, and unfortunately he, at this time, was sent to school at Elphine, in

Roscommon, where his companions, who were strangers, treated him with unkindness, and made rude jests on his appearance. While at this school he lodged with his uncle John, and is described as "a stupid, heavy blockhead, little better than a fool, whom every one made fun of." This bitter experience left traces on his mind which were never effaced, and though all confessed that his heart was kind and gentle, and his temper cheerful and agreeable, yet he had the most unaccountable alternations of gaiety and sadness all his life. Like many others, he seemed to possess two natures, ever struggling one against the other.

That Oliver was not so stupid as represented the following anecdote will testify.

"Why, Noll," exclaimed a visitor at his uncle's, "you are become a fright! When do you mean to get handsome again!"

Oliver kept silence, and the speaker repeated his question with a worse sneer.

"I mean to get better when you do!" answered the goaded boy.

The common saying was that "the Goldsmiths were a strange family; they rarely acted like other people; their hearts were always in the right place, but their heads seemed to be doing anything but what they ought." And it seems as if Oliver inherited some of their failings, as his extravagance and carelessness in money matters shows, also his want of worldly wisdom, but we must always remember that he was never rightly guided or controlled, and so judge his defects with leniency. At the age of eleven he was removed to a school at Athlone, where he stayed two years, and then went to a school at Edgeworthstown, kept by the Rev. Patrick Hughes, where he remained more than three years, and where he made some friends who have described him in their letters as "quick to take offence, but even more ready to forgive; of awkward manners, and very ugly, and particularly fond of boyish sports, also vain, with a disposition to swagger, which afterwards displayed itself in love of fine clothes and in other forms."

His school-days came to an end at the age of seventeen. It was intended, at first, to apprentice him to a trade, but on the 11th June, 1745, he was entered a sizar of Trinity College,

Dublin, and there most speedily he earned that experience which, on his elder brother consulting him on the education of his son, prompted him to answer thus: "If he has ambition strong passions, and an exquisite sensibility of contempt, do not send him to your college, unless you have no other trade for him except your own." His uncle, Contarine, who was an excellent man, assisted him with advice and pecuniary aid, and was the only member of the Goldsmith family who took pains with Oliver, or felt any real interest in him. Little went well with the poet's life at college. He had a menial position, a savage brute for tutor, and few inclinations to the study exacted. At the worst he had as he himself describes it, "a knack of getting into trouble, and a knack of hoping at the same time to get out of it," and while at college he exhibited no specimens of that genius which his maturer years displayed.

"He showed to great disadvantage in the class-rooms, and was of a low-sized, thick, robust, ungainly figure, lounging about the college courts on the wait for misery and ill-luck." The name of Oliver Goldsmith may still be seen, scratched by himself upon a window-pane, in the rooms he inhabited. None of his friends appear to have given him any help or assistance, although in after-days, when Oliver was a famous man, they liked to talk of their past acquaintance with him.

After he had been at college a year and a half, his father died suddenly, and then he lost the meagre sum advanced for his maintenance, and in future had nothing to depend upon but small gifts from his uncle Contarine, petty loans from his friends Beatty and Bryanton, or what he obtained by pawning his books. He wrote street-ballads for five shillings apiece, and sold them to save himself from starving, and would walk out at night to hear them sung. But though in such sad plight, Oliver's kind heart was touched with pity for the sufferings of others worse off than himself, and he would often give away the money, he had in this way earned, to some starving wretch. It is said that to one poor woman with five children, he gave the blankets from his own bed, taking them to the college-gate, and giving them to her.

Wilder, his tutor, was a "learned savage," whose brutality rose even to personal violence towards Goldsmith, who grew hardened and reckless, and his career at college was proclaimed

a wretched failure. At last he ran away, and for three days lived upon a shilling, and afterwards sold nearly all his clothes to save himself from dying of hunger; but his brother hearing of his state, went to him with assistance, and persuaded him to return to college. There he still continued the same unhappy life, and was again the butt of the merciless tutor.

An anecdote, often told in conversation by Bishop Percy, shows the amusement he caused by his slowness of comprehension. "Wilder, called on Goldsmith, at a lecture, to explain the centre of gravity, which, on getting no answer, he proceeded himself to explain; calling out harshly to Oliver at the close; 'Now, blockhead, where is *your* centre of gravity?' The answer, which was delivered in a slow, hollow, stammering voice, and began, 'Why, doctor, by your definition, I think it must be——' disturbed every one's centre of gravity in the lecture-room; and turning the laugh against Wilder, *turned down* poor Oliver." This college bully came to a violent death some time afterwards in a dissolute brawl. Oliver took his degree in 1749, and his name stands lowest on the list of graduates who passed on that day.

Goldsmith now returned to his mother's house; where all his relatives entreated him to enter the church; and though he felt no inclination for that calling, yet, he, in order to please them, consented to withdraw his objections, but being only twenty-one had two years to wait, and he passed them at Ballymahon, where he assisted his brother Henry with his school, and wrote verses to please his uncle Contarine; while his evenings were spent, at an old inn, in singing songs, story-telling, and playing whist with some friends; he also amused himself by playing the flute. His sister, Mrs. Hodson, says "he had no liking for the clerical profession"; he knew the remuneration for valuable labour to be poor; however, when he applied to the Bishop of Elphine, he was refused, for which many reasons are assigned, but it seems most likely that he had neglected the course of study necessary for his qualification.

His uncle Contarine now procured him a tutorship to a Mr. Flinn, which lasted a year, at the end of which time he returned to Ballymahon, with thirty pounds, and a good horse. He was not very well received, so he started for Cork, intending to go to America, but came back again in six weeks, having spent his

money, and changed his horse for "a lean beast, to which he had given the name of Fiddleback." His mother refused to entertain him, so he went to his brother's house, and there remained for some time.

It was now resolved that Oliver should begin to keep terms at the Temple; and for London, accordingly, he set out by way of Dublin. His uncle Contarine gave him fifty pounds, but his old luck followed him. In Dublin he was fleeced of all his money at a gaming-table, and the prodigal son returned home once more in disgrace and affliction. But there is a love which "suffereth long and is kind," and such a love was his uncle Contarine's.

The graceless lad was again equipped, and sent to Edinburgh to study medicine, where it is tolerably certain that any celebrity he may have attained in the schools, was not worth remarking beside his social reputation as a teller of good stories, and capital singer of good Irish songs. He had many mortifications, and in a letter to his cousin Bryanton, expressed himself thus: "An ugly and a poor man is society only for himself; and such society the world lets me enjoy in abundance; but I sit down and laugh at the world, and at myself, the most ridiculous object in it." He also wrote some grateful letters to his uncle Contarine at this time. "Thou best of men!" he exclaims, "may heaven guard and preserve you, and those you love!" and this shows that, though he did not profit by it, he valued his uncle's unceasing kindness to him.

He now proceeded to Leyden to complete his studies, where he acquired a smattering of chemistry and anatomy, and renewed his acquaintance with the gaming-table. His principal means of support were as a teacher; but the difficulty of teaching English when he knew nothing of Dutch, appears to have made it a sorry calling, for he encountered every form of distress, and after remaining at Leyden for two years, he left it, and set out to make the tour of Europe on foot, with one spare shirt, a flute, and a borrowed guinea. It was during this tour, and amid the majestic scenery of Switzerland, that our "philosophic vagabond" wrote the first sketch of his greatest poem, "The Traveller." "The desire of extensive travel," says his sister, "had always been a kind of passion with him;" and his friend, Dr. Glover, states that Goldsmith "at that time possessed

a body capable of sustaining every fatigue, and a heart not easily terrified at danger, and this ingenuous, unfortunate man became an enthusiast to the design he had formed of seeing the manners of different countries."

It was in 1755, that he started on his tour; his letters have perished, but his adventures, and the course of thought they suggested, can be traced in his writings, and it was always said that the wanderings of the "philosophic vagabond" in "The Vicar of Wakefield," had been suggested by his own. He frequently used to talk of his "distresses on the Continent, such as living on the hospitalities of the friars in convents, sleeping in barns, and picking up a kind of mendicant livelihood by the German flute with great pleasantry." In his first edition of "Polite Learning," Goldsmith writes, "Countries wear very different appearances, to travellers of different circumstances. A man who is whirled through Europe in a post-chaise, and the pilgrim who makes the grand tour on foot, will form very different conclusions."

At Louvain, where he stayed for some time, he took the degree of Medical Bachelor, became acquainted with its professors, and informed himself of its modes of study; he says, "I always forgot the meanness of my circumstances when I could converse upon such subjects." He also spent some time at Brussels, and noted all the objects of interest on his way; many allusions are made to these travels in his "Animated Nature." He also found his flute very serviceable in procuring him food and shelter for the night, and he writes, "whenever I approached a peasant's house towards evening, I played one of my most merry tunes."

When Oliver arrived in Paris, he rested for a short time, and his resources, for some unexplained reason, were improved although his appeals to his relations were productive of no benefit to him; but in his obligations to his friends for pecuniary assistance, he always showed great indifference, and the worst points of his character, and he boasted that there was hardly a kingdom in Europe in which he did not owe money. He acted as tutor to a young man of fortune—(nephew to a pawnbroker, and articled clerk to an attorney), who was heir to a large fortune in the West Indies, but who was a perfect miser; he would never visit any place, worth seeing, unless he was

assured no charge would be made, and all his thoughts were directed to the saving of money.

While abroad Goldsmith made the acquaintance of Voltaire, and many other celebrities. At Padua he is supposed to have stayed a few months, and here it is asserted that he received his degree. He returned to England in 1756 without a farthing in his pocket. His kind uncle died while he was in Italy, and he was now in extreme distress ; he had no character to give when trying to procure an engagement, and it was with much difficulty, and not till after a long delay, that he succeeded in obtaining employment as shopman to a chemist. From this situation he was rescued by the kindness of an old friend, Dr. Sleigh. Goldsmith says, "I found his heart as warm as ever, and he shared his purse and friendship with me during my continuance in London." With the doctor's help, he now tried, but unsuccessfully, to establish himself in medical practice ; he was poor physician to the poor, and earned a mere nothing. Beatty, an old schoolfellow, met him at this time—wandering about the streets, dressed in an old suit of green and gold, but he would not own his poverty. At last, he was successful in obtaining, through the interest of Samuel Richardson, the author of "Clarissa," the post of reader and corrector to the press in Salisbury Court, and was admitted sometimes to the circle of Richardson's friends.

In 1757, he obtained the post of usher in a school, kept by Dr. Milner, a dissenting minister at Peckham, whose daughter has told many interesting anecdotes of Goldsmith. She says, "He was very good-natured, played all kinds of tricks on the servants and the boys, of which he had no lack of return in kind ; told entertaining stories, was cheerful both in the family and with the young gentlemen of the school, and amused everybody with his flute and practical jokes." But the general picture conveyed by Miss Milner's recollections was sad ; Oliver's salary was generally spent before obtained ; and when her mother observed to him, "You had better, Mr. Goldsmith, let me keep your money for you, as I do for some of the young gentlemen," he replied, "In truth, Madam, there is equal need." This was the bitterest time of Goldsmith's life. He described, in "The Bee," what he had known too well, and writes, "The usher is generally the laughing-stock of the school. Every trick is played upon him ;

the oddity of his manners, his dress, or his language, is a fund of eternal ridicule ; the master himself cannot avoid joining in the laugh now and then, and the poor wretch, eternally resenting this ill-usage, lives in a state of war with all the family." He was obliged to sleep in the same bed as the French teacher, "who disturbed him for an hour every night in papering his hair ; and smelt worse than a carrion with his rancid pomatums, when he laid his head beside him on the bolster."

Goldsmith was now glad to embrace an offer made to him by Dr. Griffiths, to contribute to the "Monthly Review" for a salary, and board and lodging in the doctor's house. He made an agreement with him for a year, and thus in his twenty-ninth year was launched on the stormy path of literature. "At that time, to become an author, was to be treated as an adventurer ; a man had only to write, to be classed with what Johnson calls the lowest of all human beings, the scribbler for party. Nor was this injustice, the work of the vulgar or unthinking ; it was strongest in the greatest of living statesmen. If anyone had told William Pitt that a new man of merit, called Goldsmith, was about to try the profession of literature, he would have turned aside in scorn. It had been sufficient to throw doubt upon the career of Edmund Burke, that in this very year, he opened it with the writing of a book." *

Periodicals were the fashion of the day, and Goldsmith wrote them to keep away hunger, but he never publicly owned what he had written. A critic of the profounder sort he never was ; indeed criticism of that order was little known, and seldom practised in his day. Having quarrelled with Mrs. Griffiths, he threw up his situation, and once more faced the world, friendless and alone. After some months of privation, he applied to Dr. Milner, and was again installed as usher in his school, and again endured contempt, suffering, and many forms of care. Dr. Milner saw what he endured, and used his influence to obtain for him an appointment to one of the factories in India. In order to meet the expenses of his outfit, Goldsmith published by subscription, his "Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Literature in Europe." But owing to his inability to pass the necessary examination, his Indian appointment was cancelled, and he devoted himself anew to literary work.

* "Forster's Life of Goldsmith."

He now removed to lodgings in Green Arbour Court, between the Old Bailey and the site of Fleet Market ; " a square of tall miserable houses, the very intestines of which seemed turned inside out, to judge from the old garments and frippery that fluttered from every window. It appeared to be a region of washer-women, and lines were stretched about the little square, on which clothes were dangling to dry." He bribed the children to cease their noisy sports, by giving cakes or sweetmeats, or by a tune upon his flute, for which all the court assembled ; he would talk pleasantly with the poorest of his neighbours, and was long recollected to have greatly enjoyed the conversation of a working watchmaker in the court ; every night, he would risk his neck at those steep stone stairs ; every day, for his clothes had become too ragged to submit to daylight scrutiny, he would keep within his dirty, naked, unfurnished room, with its single wooden chair and window bench. And that was Goldsmith's home.

He now tried to obtain an appointment as hospital mate ; an appointment sufficiently undesirable, to be found always tolerably easy to get by the duly qualified. His clothes were too ragged to show himself in them till nightfall, therefore he had no resource but to apply to Griffiths for assistance, who promised to become security to a tailor for a new suit of clothes, if Goldsmith would discharge his debt to him by writing four articles for the " Monthly Review." To this Oliver consented, and equipped in his new suit presented himself before the examiners, but was found not qualified. Thus, this poor, unfortunate man saw each door of hope shut before him, but though all his bright visions faded one by one, and his spirit was broken with sorrow and adversity, yet he steadily toiled on.

" Sir," said Johnson, " the man who has vigour may walk to the East just as well as to the West, if he happens to turn his head that way." Goldsmith had walked now for many years through the valley of humiliation, but always plodding on towards the light, and though at last, after long delay, fortune smiled on him, and he enjoyed the honours of celebrity and fame, yet he had still a weary road to traverse before his goal was reached, and we now find him in great distress of mind, being burdened with debts and unable to pay them. In his extremity he pawned his fine suit of clothes, and applied to Griffiths for

help to save him from gaol. Griffiths, who was now a most prosperous man, made very hard terms with him ; he promised him twenty pounds for a "Life of Voltaire," and the price of the clothes to be deducted from that sum. He writes to his brother at this time :

"You can scarcely conceive how much eight years of sorrow, anguish, and study, have worn me down. Imagine to yourself a pale, melancholy visage, with two great wrinkles between the eyebrows, with an eye disgustingly severe, and a big wig, and you may have a perfect picture of my present appearance. . . . I have passed my days among a parcel of cool designing beings, and have contracted all their suspicious manner in my own behaviour ; I should actually be as unfit for the society of my friends at home, as I detest that which I am obliged to partake of here. I can now neither share the pleasure of a revel, nor contribute to raise its jollity. I can neither laugh nor drink, have contracted a hesitating, disagreeable manner of speaking, and a visage that looks ill-nature itself ; in short, I have thought myself into a settled melancholy and an utter disgust of all that life brings with it."

Goldsmith goes on to describe his feelings about his failures and disappointments, and then says :

"You should have given me your opinion of the poem I sent you ; you remember I intended to introduce the hero of the poem as lying in a paltry ale-house. You may take the following specimen of the manner, which I flatter myself is quite original. The room in which he lies may be described somewhat in this way :

"The window patch'd with paper, lent a ray
That feebly shew'd the state in which he lay,
The sandy floor, that grits beneath the tread :
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread ;
The game of goose was there exposed to view,
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew :
The seasons fram'd with listing, found a place,
And Prussia's monarch shew'd his lamp-black face.
The morn was cold ; he views with keen desire
A rusty grate unconscious of a fire . . .
An unpaid reck'ning on the frieze was scor'd,
And five crack'd tea-cups dress'd the chimney board."

And now imagine, after his soliloquy, the landlord to make his appearance, in order to dun him for the reckoning :

" Now with that face, so servile and so gay,
That welcomes every stranger that can pay,
With sulky eye he smook'd the patient man,
Then pulled his breeches tight and thus began," etc.

" All this, you see," says Goldsmith, " is taken from nature. It is a good remark of Montaigne's, that the wisest men often have friends with whom they do not care how much they play the fool." When the " Man in Black " describes the change of good humour with which he went to his precarious meals ; how he forbore rants of spleen at his situation, ceased to call down heaven and the stars to behold him dining on a half-pennyworth of radishes, taught his very companions to believe that he liked salad better than mutton, laughed when he was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read his Tacitus for want of more books and company ; it shows that Goldsmith was not daunted by all the miseries which surrounded him, and that he could turn aside the sharpest edge of poverty by losing himself in the pictures his imagination conjured up. The neat village ale-house of Auburn is no doubt the outcome of the paltry, slovenly pot-house of Drury Lane, and himself the hero of the various scenes depicted in his poems. No man ever put so much of his life into his writings as did Goldsmith, from his youth to the end of his career.

He now supported himself by writing for the " Critical Review," and reviewing books for Griffiths and Smollett ; he also contributed to " The Bee." This magazine " consisted of a variety of essays on the amusements, follies, and vices in fashion, particularly the most recent topics of conversation, remarks on theatrical exhibitions, memoirs of modern literature," etc. He now wrote " The Citizen of the World," and contributed to " The Busy Body," " The Lady's Magazine," and others.

At this time he became acquainted with Dr. Johnson ; he says, " This was a very grave personage, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved and even disagreeable figures I had ever seen ; but as he approached, his appearance improved ; and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived that in spite of the severity of his brow, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined."

Fortune now seemed to take some notice of a man she had long neglected. The simplicity of Goldsmith's character, the integrity of his heart, and the merit of his productions, procured him many friends, and at the end of 1760, he emerged from his mean apartments in Green Arbour Court, and took respectable lodgings in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, where he stayed for nearly two years. He had a constant levée of his distressed countrymen gathered round him, whose wants, so far as he was able, he always relieved; he has often been known to leave himself without a guinea, in order to help the necessities of others, and his thoughtlessness was so great that whatever he earned he always remained poor. He visited the pot-house clubs, attended the theatre, entertained his friends without the means of paying for it, and says, "Were I to be angry at men for being fools, I could here have found ample room for declamation; but alas! I have been a fool myself, and why should I be angry with them for being something so natural to every child of humanity?"

Goldsmith gave a supper to inaugurate the event of his acquaintance with Johnson, who, it is well known, was remarkable for the untidiness of his dress, usually wearing a rusty brown suit, soiled shirt, loose knee-breeches, unbuckled shoes, and a little old unpowdered wig, looking very much like a beggar-man; but he now appeared in a new suit of clothes, a new wig nicely powdered, and everything about him so perfectly dissimilar from his usual habits and appearance, that the friend who accompanied him to Goldsmith's lodgings could not help enquiring the cause of this singular change.

"Why, sir," said Johnson, "I hear that Goldsmith, who is a very great sloven, justifies his disregard of cleanliness and decency by quoting my practice; and I am desirous this night to show him a better example." Campbell says, "Goldsmith is fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future, his sentiments are those of a man of sense, his actions those of a fool; his fortitude enables him to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake yet his sensibility causes him to be affected by the breaking of a teacup."

Men were attracted by his "Chinese Letters," and other works, and he wrote at last with more hope of fame and remuneration, but ill-health now fell upon him, and he was

ordered to Bath, where he wrote an amusing account of Beau Nash, not affixing his name to it, however. Neither did he do so to many other works. He says, "The only way to make love *now*, I have heard Mr. Nash say, was to take no manner of notice of the lady." Johnson purchased this book, which shows his interest in Goldsmith, and is a proof of his friendship for him. The humorous Foote, Reynolds the painter, Wilkes Garrick, Hogarth, and many other celebrated men, now all made the acquaintance of the poet.

At the close of 1762, Goldsmith moved to lodgings in Islington, kept by Mrs. Elizabeth Fleming. There were still green fields and lanes in Islington, and here, away from the noise and bustle of Wine Office Court, he found walks where houses were not, and quiet hours that might be given to precious study. He was constantly occupied with work for publishers and booksellers, and yet he says, "Whenever I write anything, I think the public *make a point* to know nothing about it." It was here he wrote a "History of England in a series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son." It had a great success, and passed through many editions, but it was not generally known to be Goldsmith's work. In 1763, was founded The Literary Club, an association of celebrated men of the period; here Goldsmith did not shine to advantage, not only on account of his awkward manners and appearance, but from his love of finery, he made choice of dress that only made plainer the defects he wished to hide, and from self-love he exaggerated his faults as well as his virtues, and thus failed to make himself liked or understood; but that Goldsmith had more wit than people then supposed was shown by the answer he gave them when questioned about Boswell. "Who *is* this Scotch cur at Johnson's heels?" asked someone, amazed at their sudden intimacy. "He is not a cur," answered Goldsmith, "You are too severe. He is only a burr. Tom Davis flung him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty of sticking."

In 1764, Goldsmith removed to a lodging on the library staircase of the Temple, and in few of the years of his life had he more struggles and distress than in this one, and yet in none did he accomplish so much for an enduring fame. Poverty pressed heavily upon him, and he was arrested for debt by his landlady. Johnson came to his aid and took a novel of his

composition to Francis Newberry, who purchased it for sixty pounds; this novel was the celebrated "Vicar of Wakefield," of which no book on record has obtained a wider popularity, and none is more likely to endure. It is designed to show us that patience in suffering, that persevering reliance on the providence of God, that quiet labour, cheerful endeavour, and an indulgent forgiveness of the faults and infirmities of others, are the easy and certain means of pleasure in this world, and of turning pain to noble uses.

Soon afterwards "The Traveller" appeared; the poem had been, eminently and in a peculiar degree, written from personal feeling and observation; and the course of its composition has been traced with the course of its author's life. The poem slowly worked itself into fame, but it is questionable if Goldsmith obtained much substantial benefit from the sale of it. At this time he practised as a physician for a little while, and gave way to his failing of vanity by dressing in a very fine manner. He wore purple silk small-clothes, a handsome scarlet roquelaire, buttoned close under the chin, a full dress professional wig, a sword, and a gold-headed cane.

Mr. and Mrs. Thrale were great friends of the poet, and he now became almost a resident in the family at Streatham; but his debts were a constant source of worry to him always, and he was continually writing to provide means to set himself free from them; he also eked out his necessities with hack employment and parsimonious lendings, and dramatic labour, and now, produced his comedy of "The Good Natured Man," which was very successfully performed by Garrick at Covent Garden Theatre. But Goldsmith had never really cause to be content with his position among the men of his time, or with the portion of celebrity at any period during his life assigned to him. He was a very free talker, and that did some of the mischief. He was candid and simple enough to say aloud, what others would more prudently have concealed, but no man more thoroughly practised moderation, gentleness, and indulgence in his judgments of others, "which are not qualities of a mean spirit, but virtues of a great and noble kind, and such as dignify our nature, as much as they contribute to our fortune and repose." Goldsmith's habit of living merely from day to day, beset every better scheme of life; the difficulty with which he earned

money never taught him its value. It is doubtful if the charge of gambling can be supported, to more than a very trifling extent; but he was profuse in his generosity and entertainments, and threw away money that should have liquidated his debts. And yet manful were his endeavours, and he bore his troubles bravely with cheefulness and hope. Pope remarks that few men live at present, properly speaking; but are preparing to live at another time, which may or may not arrive.

Previous to the publication of his "Deserted Village," the bookseller had given him a note for one hundred guineas for the copy. The doctor mentioned this a few hours after to one of his friends, who observed it was a very great sum for so short a performance. "In truth,"—a favourite expression of Goldsmith's—"I think so too; it is much more than the honest man can afford, or the piece is worth. I have not been easy since I received it; I will therefore go back and return him his note." This he actually did, and left it entirely to the bookseller to pay him according to the profits of the poem, which turned out very considerable.

Goldsmith, in 1768, took a little cottage, and called it Shoemaker's Paradise, one of that craft having built it, and laid it out with flying Mercuries, *jets d'eau*, and other preposterous ornaments, though the ground it stood upon covered considerably less than half an acre; and it was here that the poet found the only spot where he could sit in peace without the terrors of arrest hanging over him. Here he wrote his "History of Rome," and continued his close friendship with Johnson, whom his friends often called "Ursa Major!" "Ah," said Goldsmith, when such expressions were repeated to him, "they may say that! Johnson to be sure has a rough manner, but no man alive has a more tender heart. He has nothing of the bear but his skin." It is clear that with the present year Goldsmith passed into greater expenses; used the influence of a popularity which never stood higher than now, to obtain means for thoughtless indulgence; and involved himself in the responsibilities which afterwards overwhelmed him.

With all his accomplishments and powers he does not appear to have been either wise or happy. Though simple, most humane and generous, he was irritable, passionate, peevish and sullen; and spleen has run so high with him that he is said to

have "often left a party of convivial friends abruptly in the evening, in order to go home, and brood over his misfortunes."

He never lost his over-sensitive nature. Could he but have practised in his person any part of the exquisite address he possessed with his pen, not an objection would have been heard against him, but his vanity and uncouth manners were a source of annoyance to his friends.

He wore his heart upon his sleeve. Attentions are cheaply rendered that win sympathy, and Goldsmith was prodigal of these; and his genial ways, his hospitable habits, especially to his countrymen, were notorious. Day's description of his appearance is as follows: "He was short, about five feet six inches; strong, but not heavy in make, and rather fair in complexion; his hair, such at least as could be distinguished from his wig, was brown. His features were plain, but not repulsive; certainly not so when lighted up by conversation. His face was round and pitted with the small-pox, and a somewhat remarkable projection of his forehead and his upper lip suggested excellent sport for the caricaturists; the expression of benevolence, intelligence, and good humour predominated over every disadvantage, and made his face extremely pleasing."

Goldsmith's health now began to fail, and he suffered from a disease (strangury) induced by sedentary habits; and to obtain relief from which he had recourse to James' powders, a fashionable medicine of the day. He had at this time several disputes with booksellers pending, and his circumstances were verging on positive distress.

He worked hard to free himself, and continued writing. "She Stoops to Conquer," a "Grecian History," and his "Animated Nature," are among the most notable of his productions; but, no matter how much he earned, it was always spent before it was received, and his last days were made miserable by his debts. His illness was accompanied by low, nervous fever, and his medical man saw that if he persisted in taking his favourite remedy that it would be dangerous. However, all his persuasions were of no avail, Goldsmith continued obstinate and took the powders, and from that time began to get worse. He was so weak and low that he had neither strength nor spirit to speak.

A week passed, and then the end arrived suddenly. Strong

convulsions seized him and he sank rapidly, and expired on the 4th of April, 1774, in the forty-sixth year of his age. His remains were interred in the burial ground of the Temple Church. At a suggestion of Reynolds, a monument was placed to his memory in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, with an inscription written by Johnson.

Goldsmith's character was strongly illustrated by Pope in one line :

" In wit a man, simplicity a child."

CHARLOTTE A. PRICE.

MISSED AND WON.

BY STEWART DAWSON.

I.

"AND so you're ruined, are ye, young gentleman?" enquired Uncle Ralph Digby, with some asperity, of his luckless nephew Archie Butler; not that he was of an unkindly disposition, but that he regarded a modicum of severity as the due accompaniment of the tale of distress that had just been poured into his ears.

"Broke, uncle—stony broke!" was the dismal response.

"Um! ha! I suppose that means much the same thing. And what's to be done now, eh?"

"I—I don't know," replied Archie hesitatingly, "that's why I wanted to ask your advice, because with your experience——"

"I've no experience of being broken stonily, Archie," rejoined his uncle solemnly. "There was two thousand pound or thereabouts in cash and consols when your father died, and the lease of the house at Norwood fetched over three thousand—don't interrupt me; I have a good memory for figures—and your father's partner bought his share of the business for five thousand—ah, why didn't you stick to it, Archie? As fine a solicitor's business as any in Lincoln's Inn Fields!"

"My father never brought me up to it, you may remember, uncle; he wanted me to be——"

"Aye, aye, I remember, my boy; your poor father had ideas of founding a county family—Butlers of Butler's Castle, I

suppose, or suchlike rubbish ; better have stuck you to a desk in his own office, or sent you out to me to Lisbon to learn the wine trade ; but there," continued the old gentleman, noticing, by the pained expression of Archie's face, that these strictures on his father's conduct were by no means to his taste, "that's all past and gone, no good crying over spilt milk. Your father left you ten thousand pounds, four hundred a year for ever, and you've spent it all in two years, and nothing to show for it, nothing whatever." Uncle Ralph appeared quite disappointed that there was no more tangible evidence of ruin. "No notion how it's gone, eh ? Kept no accounts, of course ?"

"No, uncle, except my bank pass-book."

"Aye, Archie, let me see that ; so 'self,' 'self,' 'self,' 'Guinney & Guinney, £56," what ! the tailors—£56 to a tailor, well, I never !" and Uncle Ralph glanced at his own raiment, designed certainly more for use than ornament. "Ah, well, as we said, spilt milk—what does it matter ?"

Archie listened approvingly, and decided that Uncle Ralph was taking a very creditably philosophical view of the situation.

"'Carruthers, £30,' 'self,' 'Carruthers,' 'Carruthers,' 'self and Carruthers' ; eh," continued the old gentleman under his breath, "but Carruthers seems to have had the pickings of this pie. And who's Carruthers, Archie—not another tailor ? A hatter, or a hosier, maybe ?"

"Hatter, hosier, no, uncle !" replied Archie, smiling, in spite of his misery, at his uncle's mistake. "Carruthers isn't a tradesman ; we were at Harrow together ; he is one of my dearest friends."

"Dearest ? Aye, aye, Archie, dear enough—dear enough," returned the senior, with what seemed half a chuckle, half a sigh, as he ran his forefinger up and down the columns of the pass-book. "I hope you've none dearer. Here's over £2,000 worth of cheques in your dear friend's name. What, in the name of dear friendship, do they stand for ?"

"Well, it's rather hard to explain. He and I went into a lot of things together."

"As partners ?"

"Well, not exactly partners ; there were no partnership deeds. Carruthers said documents only led to confusion in business matters."

"And you believed him?"

"Naturally, uncle; he had lots of experience, and I——"

"Drew the cheques; and now you have the experience, and he—— Ah! the old story. And what were these precious schemes—horse-racing, stock-exchange?"

"No, uncle; not gambling, art!"

"Art! what do you mean, my boy?"

"Well, Carruthers and I held decided and, I suppose, somewhat peculiar views on matters of art."

"And they were——?"

"That in all branches of art amateurs were capable of finer results than professionals, so we started a picture gallery for amateur painters, and a magazine for amateur authors."

"I wonder you didn't have a hospital for amateur doctors and a church for amateur parsons!"

"That would have been absurd, of course," replied Archie loftily, but without advancing any argument as to where its absurdity differed from his own schemes. "Unfortunately, the paying public did not respond to us as we had anticipated, and now the shutters are up at the magazine office, and there's a man in possession at the picture gallery."

"And Carruthers—have you applied to him?"

"Yes, I have; but it's no use asking him for money, uncle; he only laughs and says he has none; I'm sure he'd pay if he could, he's the most generous fellow, lavish in tips, and gives cabmen just what they ask, or more—ah, you may shake your head, Uncle Ralph, but you don't know Carruthers."

"I think I've met something like him before this, Archie. It's easy to be free with your tips when you've the handling of another man's cash; I'm old-fashioned enough to prefer justice to generosity, if the two must be separated. When I was last in England, Archie, a gentlemanly-looking young fellow tried to ease me of my purse, by what I was told they called the confidence trick, and I fancy your friend Carruthers plays the same game, but for higher stakes than my young acquaintance could afford. Well, Archie, you must have another shy at him though it may be trying to get blood out of a stone; but if he won't help you, your own kith and kin shan't desert you, and now I think of it, you had better come along with me, whatever happens. You'll have a good long sea-trip, as I do not propose

to land at Lisbon on my return, but to continue my voyage to Rio, where I'm about to establish a branch. I expect to be in South America for nine or ten months, and if during that time your conduct meets with my approval, I've no doubt we shall manage to find something for you to do. *If Carruthers pays up* you'll be none the worse for having a little capital in hand; and, however that may be, I've a notion you'll be safer with me in parts where there's no great demand for amateurs and their work, so far as I've heard. Now to-day's the 16th of July; I'm due in Bristol to-night, and I've half the big towns in the kingdom to run through in the next few days, but I sail back from Southampton by the *Lusitania*, on the 26th. I've a free passage on board of her, and I can arrange for one for you; the owner's a personal friend of mine, as I ship all my wines by his line. So all you will have to do is to find your own way from London to Southampton by mid-day on the 26th; I suppose Carruthers or no Carruthers, you'll be able to do that. Now, I must be off, so good-bye, my boy, till we meet on board; no, no, no thanks, you entertained your aunt and cousins very hospitably in London last winter, when you can't have been as flush of coin as we thought you, and now it's our turn, that's all. Good-bye." And the old gentleman hustled away to escape from the torrent of his nephew's gratitude.

II.

I DON'T exactly know how it happened that Archie missed his train at Waterloo on the 26th; many things may have caused the delay, in fact, many things did cause many delays that eventful morning. Of course, having gone to bed unwontedly early, and having in consequence lain awake all the first part of the night, when he *did* go to sleep he overslept himself; and equally of course, having over night, with great forethought, packed his razor and shaving apparatus generally at the very bottom of his portmanteau, and having consequently to get shaved on his way to the station, he found every barber's chair beset by customers, each seeming in want of every ministration a hair-dresser can be called upon to bestow, shaving, hair-cutting, singeing, shampooing, and what not. Despairing at last of obtaining any attention, Archie had hurled himself into his

hansom, and even then might have been in time had his cabman understood the topography of Waterloo Station ; but he didn't ; and after first carrying his fare to the loop-line, and then utterly losing his way in attempting to explore the underground passage, he eventually arrived at the departure platform of the main line (whence, as all the world, except that particular cabman, knows one starts for Southampton) in time to enable Archie to watch the tail of the train by which he should have travelled disappearing in the direction of Vauxhall. .

Now this was a serious matter ; trains may be, and often are, missed ; and no great harm is done. But Archie's case was different ; this train to him was all in all, and he had missed it, and therefore it was that he stood on the platform, staring blankly and ruefully at an automatic machine, as if he would extract sympathy or assistance from that which was only invented to supply chocolate or butter-scotch ; for, in sooth, he was at his wits' end.

As Uncle Ralph wished it, he had made further application to Carruthers, and, as Uncle Ralph had anticipated, without result. He found his dear friend in the entrance hall of the Tarentine Club (an establishment noted for its good living and well-cushioned upholstery, where attention to creature comforts was cultivated as a fine art), carefully fitting an orchid into his button-hole—a west-end florist sent him per contract three orchids a day. To detect the slight shade of annoyance that passed over Carruthers' face on recognising his visitor would have required a sharper observer than Archie, who received in perfect good faith the somewhat exaggerated *bonhomie* of his subsequent welcome. Stephen Carruthers could see as far into a millstone as most people, and shrewdly suspecting the nature of Archie's errand, with no little sagacity invited him to lunch ; to dun your friend for money, even if justly owing, is at best an embarrassing task, doubly so when, as in this case, his victuals choke your petition. Archie, however, managed somehow to plead his cause, and emboldened, partly perhaps by the lunch and partly by desperation, pleaded it more urgently than he had ever done before ; but Stephen Carruthers put aside his pleas with a half-contemptuous laugh.

"My dear Butler," he said, in tones of quiet and not unamused reproof, "I can hardly tell whether you're joking or not, but I

must entreat you, if you're in earnest, to be a bit more sensible ; and if you're chaffing to put a little more fun into it."

"I'm serious right enough, you know that, Carruthers. You owe me over £2,000 ; well, over that."

"Deuce of a head you've got for figures, Archie ; it's a great gift—now if I try a simple job like marking a game of billiards I make such a lot of mistakes——"

"It's not very difficult to tell the amount when my pocket's full of your I O U's," retorted Archie, not a little nettled by his friend's airy treatment of his just claims. "There they are," he continued, producing a very respectable little sheaf of promissory documents, and spreading them by his side ; "now, what do you mean to do with them ?"

"As those little autographs are by right of purchase yours, not mine, it would be the height of bad taste on my part to propose dealing with another man's property : but if I might be allowed to advise you in the matter, I should recommend your lighting your pipe with them."

"Good advice from your point of view, no doubt," rejoined Archie.

"What better can you suggest from your own ?"

"Surely if you drive me to anything unfriendly, I can go for you on that paper."

"Yes, you can do that," Carruthers admitted without hesitation.

"And recover the amount due on it."

"Well that," Carruthers opined, "was not so easy."

"But hang it on the face of those I O U's."

"Quite so, my dear Butler, and if on the face of them, or the back of them, or anywhere else we could find the cash for the purpose I'd pay you back this minute. What the dickens would you have me do ? You can go at me as hard as you like, though what good it'll do you to sell up a man who lives in lodgings and owns nothing in the world but a port-manteau and a hat-box, I can't for the life of me see."

"But, hang it all, you owe me so much ; there it is in black and white ; and if, as you say, you haven't the money to pay you'll have to prove it—isn't that the law ?" queried Archie, a bit shaken in his attack.

"I think not," replied Carruthers blandly ; "at least theoretic-

cally it may be, but I believe what practically happens is this ; if you say I have the money to pay with, you'll have to prove that you're correct, which is a distinction not without a difference from the law as laid down by you. You see, these little jobs cost the deuce of a lot in time and money."

"What! do you mean to say that——"

"I don't know much about the law of debtor and creditor, at least, not from the creditor's point of view," remarked Carruthers modestly, "but I've always had an idea that a petition in bankruptcy is an expensive luxury—runs you into three figures in no time, I fancy. Come, come, what's the good of grumbling because I don't pay you something I haven't got? Put those beastly things in your pocket before the waiter sees them. I'll redeem 'em as soon as I have any money, give you my word I will. If ever you find me with a couple of thousand about me, just come upon me for them, and they're yours. Now, let's change the subject, old fellow, its getting tedious ; have a liqueur, proper thing after peaches, I believe. No? Well, perhaps you're right, the young and innocent shouldn't start on liqueurs so early. Bill, waiter! Ah—yes, keep the change, something for yourself, you know." Carruthers always tipped club-waiters in flat defiance of all regulations. "I'm off to Hurlingham, will you come? No again! disagreeable chap you are ; no pleasing you to-day. Hurlingham, cabby. Give you ten shillings if you're there in twenty minutes, without killing anyone or being summoned for furious driving. Ta-ta, Archie."

And Carruthers was off ; leaving Archie to ponder on the club steps, whether what he had heard was the truth, and to decide that, whether it were or not, he could not afford to discover.

And so it came to pass that on that 26th of July aforesaid, Archie Butler came to Waterloo Station to take the early train to Southampton—and missed it.

Rousing himself at last from the stupor which had been the first effect of the shock, he took a few turns up and down the platform, and tried calmly to face the altered state of his affairs.

"By Jove," so his thoughts ran, "this is a go ; the last straw, and no mistake. Uncle Ralph does the right thing with a vengeance, and gives a fellow a leg-up when he has no right to expect it, and I must needs chuck everything away, like a——"

"Goin' on by this train, sir? Label your portmanteau, sir?"

"Where for, sir?" this from a porter, rudely interrupting Archie's soliloquy.

"No, yes, at least I don't know. Where does it go to?" replied he, somewhat incoherently, for he had as yet scarcely recovered his mental equilibrium.

"Fast train to West of England, this is, sir — Salisbury Exeter and Plymouth."

"When is the next to Southampton?" was the next enquiry.

"Southampton train just gone, sir," replied the porter, answering evasively after the manner of his kind, and producing a groan from the miserable Archie, who was only too well aware of the fact. "That were the nine o'clock, next at eleven-fifteen, sir."

"And when does it get to Southampton?" asked Archie.

This was too much for an off-hand answer from the porter, whose knowledge of the trains ended as they left the London terminus; but a brief reference to a railway time-table settled the question. The eleven-fifteen reached Southampton at one thirty-five, and the *Lusitania* was to sail at noon — not a moment later, as it had been impressed upon Archie—or she would lose the tide.

No! there was no hope; Archie had missed his train, the *Lusitania* would sail without him, and his uncle would never forgive this last neglect of his instructions.

Himself the most punctual of men, Ralph Digby hated and despised unpunctuality in others, and Archie now called to mind how seriously his own boyish shortcomings in that respect had in times past affected his relative's temper. Mr. Digby was now twenty years older, and what had tried him at forty was not likely to be easier to bear at sixty. Moreover, Rio, the port for which Mr. Digby had proclaimed himself to be bound, was a matter of 24 days from Southampton. Archie had been studying time-tables, and had all the statistics at his fingers' ends—he was not likely to write to his nephew during his brief stoppage at Lisbon, even in the highly improbable event of his having anything pleasant to communicate; it would therefore, be 48 days at the very earliest before Archie could receive a letter from Rio—more likely two months—and how was that luckless youth to support existence in the interim? Secure in his uncle's promise, he had regarded the whole question of his

future as comfortably settled, and had therefore, in the few days which intervened between the offer and his intended departure, expended his remaining finances in a few necessities for the voyage. His passage on board the *Lusitania* being secured for him, he had merely to reserve a few shillings for his fare to Southampton, and as he turned over the contents of his purse, he found them to consist of the sum of fifteen shillings and sixpence, which, with a stout portmanteau full of good serviceable clothes, constituted his sole worldly wealth.

He had parted with every scrap of jewellery, and had exchanged his gold watch for a cheap American timekeeper, hoping that an appearance presenting no sign of affluence or extravagance would the better accord with the humbled position in which he was about to appear before his uncle; and with the same view, he had chosen an outfit of the plainest description. What *could* he do? How face the world for two months at least, perhaps longer, on fifteen and sixpence, and a portmanteau full of clothes?

A train was now filling for Portsmouth, with people bound for Goodwood, Southsea and Cowes, noisy, well-dressed and happy. They jarred upon Archie, who, to avoid them, lounged through the booking office to the outer platform, and there fell into the arms of Stephen Carruthers, who gorgeously attired, was as usual overpaying his cabman to an extent far exceeding that worthy's wildest hopes.

"Hullo, Butler!" said he, "what liars some people are! some one told me only yesterday that you had gone out to start a 'wine-from-the-wood' shop in Portugal, and here you are all the time. That's a shocking bad coat, old man, makes you look like a footman out of place, blessed if it don't. Label the things Portsmouth, porter, smoking carriage, not too full, want something for yourself I suppose, there's half-a-crown, get me a carriage to myself, and I'll make it half a sovereign! wish I could afford to travel in comfort, and have a special; that's the worst of being a pauper, eh, Butler?" And Carruthers strolled along the platform towards the Portsmouth train, attended by the obsequious porter who was ready to do anything for a gentleman so free with his small change.

Language would be inadequate to express how angry Archie was at his dear friend's pleasantries, he positively boiled

over with indignation; that this man, who owed him a sum, which would have rendered him independent of his uncle's bounty, could travel first-class, with a carriage to himself very likely, and throw about half-crowns and half-sovereigns as if they were but half-pence, while he, Archie Butler, had but fifteen and sixpence in the world! pah! it was not to be endured—but the worst of it was that like many another unpleasant thing it *had* to be endured. How dared that fellow, too, make insulting remarks about his clothes? He was a cad, Carruthers was, a low cad, and Archie was a fool not to have found it out sooner, and he was glad—"damned glad"—I am afraid he went so far as to own to himself in the unspoken soliloquy, I am transcribing from his thoughts, to see the back of his confounded train as it steamed out of the station, and he hoped he'd never set eyes on the ill-bred hound again; "footman out of place" indeed!

Archie was standing opposite a large advertisement wherein the merits of the Katharodermatic soap were alluringly displayed in the most ornamental of types on a background of looking-glass; and as he appealed involuntarily to his own reflection therein against the injustice of Carruthers' description, the sight of a very stubbly chin reminded him that he had not as yet accomplished the purpose for which he had earlier in the day wasted those precious moments at the barber's. There was a hair-dresser's shop handy on the platform, and, turning in there, Archie dropped into a chair and demanded a clean shave; then while the razor made play about his face, did his mind continue to revolve the same dismal problem—to wit, how to support existence for weeks—it might be for years or for ever—on fifteen and sixpence. So absorbed was he in his thoughts, which led him, however, to no satisfactory conclusion, that it was not until he looked in the glass after the barber had concluded his labours, that he saw to his horror and disgust, that the man, placing no doubt the fullest interpretation on the words 'a clean shave' had removed his moustache along with the stubble which decorated his cheeks and chin; and when remonstrated with, added insult to injury by retorting:

"Beg pardon, sir, you said 'a clean shave,' and I didn't notice no difference between the hupper lip and the rest."

Poor Archie was too down on his luck to discuss the matter further, nor would any amount of argument have replaced his

lost moustache ; so he paid his money, and wandering disconsolately back upon the platform, took a long look at his countenance in the looking-glass advertisement.

"Well," he muttered, "I shouldn't have thought it would have made such a difference. Why I look like a—a— yes, damn it, that brute was right, like a footman out of place !"

Time wore on, and still Archie made no effort to leave the railway station ; he had no business there now that he had missed his train, but then for that matter he had now no business anywhere, and it was as good a place as any other for the settlement of the great question how to battle with envious fate on fifteen and sixpence. No ! since his shave he had but fifteen and threepence ; and he was now beginning to get so excessively hungry, that a further reduction of his capital appeared inevitable and that at no distant date.

III.

It was now about half-past eleven, and Archie had just witnessed the departure of the 11.15 train to Southampton, wondering the while in a listless, unconcerned sort of way whether after all he had better have gone down by it on the mere chance of the *Lusitania* having delayed her departure, and as he turned on his heel after watching the train until it was out of sight, he cannoned against a new arrival who came hurrying across the platform, laden with hat-box, rugs, sticks, and other minor impedimenta of travel, to find himself, as Archie had found himself an hour or two earlier, too late for the now departed train.

"Confound it all," exclaimed the new-comer, as the hat-box rolled one way and the rugs another on the platform, "can't you get out of the way ?"

"Beg pardon, I'm sure," replied Archie, politely assisting to gather up the scattered chattels, while their owner, assuring himself by a glance along the platform that the train he was in quest of had actually gone, turned upon an eminently respectable looking manservant who now came up in charge of the heavier luggage, and began to lay the blame for missing the train pretty exclusively to that worthy's account.

"What the deuce do you think I pay you wages for, Davis, if you can't pack a couple of portmanteaux and get them half across town in time for a mid-day train ?"

"Couple o' portmanteaux do you call it?" grumbled Davis; "why, what with one thing and another, there's enough things there to take a man hours and hours to pack properly; however, of course, that's your affair sir, if it's your fancy to travel with a tailor's shop to your back."

The words were not too respectful, but Archie was not prepared for the extreme resentment which they called forth from the man's master.

"Now look here, Davis," he said, changing the high tone in which he had previously spoken to graver and more measured accents, "I told you the next time we fell out it would be the last; I've put up with you and your ways long enough; I'm not going to take a cheeky rascal like you into the country with me, hanged if I am. Here's a fiver; it's more than you're entitled to, take it and your luggage and go about your business, and don't think of applying to me for a character, for I shan't give you one, that's all."

"If you suppose——" began Davis in somewhat loud and angry tones.

"And if you suppose that I'm going to stop on this platform, and be bully-ragged by a discharged servant, till we've got a crowd round us, you're jolly well mistaken. Here, policeman," he continued, turning to an official, whom the noise of the altercation had attracted to the spot, "I've just discharged my man here for inattention and impertinence; if he thinks he's any further claim upon me he knows where to find me; just let him understand he can't annoy me here," and a half-crown found its way into the constable's ready palm.

All this time Archie stood by, holding the hat-box and rugs; everything indeed had passed so quickly that it had been quite impossible for him to move away; he had therefore overheard all that had passed, since neither master nor man had thought of moderating their tones.

The valet, somewhat staggered by the sudden shock of his dismissal, seemed inclined to argue the matter further, but the constable invited him in tones which seemed to admit of no denial to "step outside," and the two moved away along the platform together, while the young man took a hurried turn in the opposite direction.

"Gone to blow off the steam with a modest quencher, I suppose,"

soliloquised Archie, "thought so, lucky beggar," as the subject of his speculations disappeared into the refreshment room ; "wish I could follow his example," and his mind was beginning once again to wrestle with the dismal problem of his finances, and to endeavour to spread fifteen and threepence over X, the unknown quantity of time, when the young fellow reappeared, and stood apparently lost in thought about twenty yards away.

He was about Archie's own age ; perhaps a trifle younger, tall and slight, with dark complexion and hair, and clean-shaved, except for a small and carefully waxed moustache. His clothes were well-cut, but amazingly loud in pattern and colour ; indeed, with a large diamond pin in his white cravat, pink spots on his shirt, blue horse-shoes on his waistcoat, a fawn-coloured hat, and white spats, he looked, as Archie cynically remarked to himself : ' Almost too good to be true.'

He meanwhile had been carefully regarding Archie ; and what he saw before him was a young man of somewhat negative appearance, neither very short nor very tall, neither very fair nor very dark, plain of feature, and with an expression from which his present anxieties had banished its usually bright and independent air. His dress was very plain ; Archie was not the man to do things by halves ; and when he made up his mind that his own tailor was not the man to be trusted with his outfit on this occasion, he bethought him of a little foreigner in the purlieu of Soho, who had at one time done some repairs for him, and who was accordingly commissioned to clothe the repentant prodigal in a style suitable to his humbled fortunes.

Right well had the excellent alien executed his task ; and as Archie stood on the platform at Waterloo, no trace of his former extravagant self was to be seen—indeed, he had if anything overdone matters, and allowed his wardrobe to drag him down to unnecessary depths of self-abasement.

Suddenly the resplendent being in dazzling raiment pulled himself together, and looking as Archie observed, "like a hosier's shop-window out for a walk," strode towards him.

"Got the things safe?" he asked, "hat-box, rugs, sticks and umbrellas? That's right, my man, thanks for looking after them. Here, catch hold!"

And as he relieved Archie of his property, he thrust a shilling into that worthy's passive hand.

Archie's face at this address and the accompanying tip was a picture ; but it was unfortunately lost on his unconscious benefactor, who had turned away, and was now moving down the platform to deposit his small parcels with the rest of his luggage ; while doing so, the strap which bound together the bundle of rugs, umbrellas and sticks, being insecurely fastened, allowed those various impedimenta to scatter themselves loosely in admired confusion on the platform. Too lazy to pick them up for himself, their owner turned for aid. Not a porter was in sight, so he addressed himself to Archie.

"Hi ! my man."

Somehow, on its repetition, this unceremonious address failed to excite Archie's indignation. The humourous side of the situation was beginning to tickle his sense of the ridiculous ; and, in what he imagined to be tones of the subtlest sarcasm, he replied :

"Yes, sir, what can I do for you ?"

Perhaps the sarcasm was *too* subtle, perhaps the ears to which it was addressed were not sufficiently observant, at any rate the reply came perfectly unconcerned and indifferent.

"Lend us a hand with these things, and look sharp about it."

As if in a dream Archie busied himself to repack the bundle and replace it in the strap ; while he of the gorgeous apparel looked on approvingly, but took no part in the work. When it was completed, he remarked :

"You seem a pretty handy sort of a chap. Are you in want of a job ?"

Archie was thunderstruck—there was no mistaking the tones of authority in which he was being addressed. Was it his shabby suit or the loss of his moustache that had so sadly altered his appearance ? While these thoughts flashed through his brain, his questioner, still awaiting a reply, repeated with additional emphasis :

"Are you in want of a job ? Of course you've been in service before—anyone with half an eye can tell that from your appearance."

Archie's rage at this outspoken criticism utterly deprived him of the power of speech, and was at once set down as the silence of acquiescence.

"You see, I've just sacked my man for carelessness and

impertinence. I'm off on a round of visits—country houses, so on; can't go alone—don't get a damn thing done for you if you haven't your man with you." By this time he was talking quite as much to himself as to Archie, arguing himself, as it seemed, into the advisability of adopting so unusual a method of engaging a domestic. "Of course, I know nothing about you, and there's no time to get your character, but you look as if you'd suit me."

("Do I? Confound your impudence!" thought Archie.)

"So I'll take you with me on the job—two guineas a month, and all found of course—and if you suit me we'll talk of something permanent later on."

Archie was silent, revolving the desperate state of his finances, his failure to keep the appointment which should have obtained his uncle's favour, and indeed all the dismal catalogue of his embarrassments. But earnestly as he desired a way out of his difficulties, domestic service seemed, as he mentally phrased it, "rather a tall order," and, even driven into a corner as he was, he paused.

"What are you hesitating about? Anything better in view?"

Archie could most truly reply that he had not.

"It's a little sudden, sir," he said, with as much of Jeames-like deference as he could manage to put into his voice; "give me a minute or two to think it over."

"All right, don't hurry yourself—take five."

With this limited respite Archie addressed himself to settle the question of his fate. If he didn't accept this astounding offer, what was he to do? He had within the few days which had elapsed since his uncle's invitation taken a somewhat malicious pleasure in impressing it on his friends, to whom he painted his future prospects in the most glowing colours; for very shame he could not bring himself to appeal to them with the news that he had at the outset forfeited all those gifts of fortune by missing the train. His appearance was so altered by the loss of his moustache that, even if he encountered any of his friends, he felt pretty confident of remaining unrecognised. Were there any other means of identifying him? No! His linen was only marked with his initials; his luggage consisted of a second-hand portmanteau, bought a few days before—his own having proved too large for the cabin on his intended

voyage—on which he had fortunately forgotten to have his name inscribed ; and, finally, this offer was not only a bird in the hand, but there was positively none in the bush ; wherefore it came to pass that, having reviewed all these considerations, Archie Butler, at the end of the five minutes, rejoined the other and formally accepted his offer.

His new master received his decision quite as a matter of course, which offended Archie not a little, and at once began to give him instructions for the journey.

"Train goes at 12.45 from this platform," he said ; "be here by the half-hour. Get yourself some food ; you've got forty minutes," and he handed Archie a couple of half-crowns, and was turning away when—"Oh ! by the way," he added, "you'd better know whose service you're in, Davis—always call my men 'Davis'" (this in answer to a very surprised look from Archie), "saves learning a lot of new names, you know. Here's my card."

He walked away, and Archie, left to himself, glanced at the bit of pasteboard in his hand and read :

"MR. ALURED SEPTIMUS GUINNEY."

Horror upon horror's head ! Not only was he in domestic service, under a false name bestowed by the caprice of his new master, but that master was, by the irony of Fate, the son of his own tailor ! Instinctively he made as if he would tear to atoms the offending card, but his purpose was somehow hindered by the coins in his other hand, and as he stood there, the half-crowns balanced, so to speak, against the visiting-card, it suddenly occurred to him, and not for the first time that morning, that he had breakfasted very early and very hurriedly, and that he was ravenously hungry ; he hesitated, and, hesitating, was—so far as his resolutions of independence were concerned—lost. When a man's appetite declares against him, truly his state is parlous ; his enemies are at the gate, nay, rather within the gate—and his only course is to surrender, as Archie did, at discretion, and like him to bow to Fate with as good a grace as possible.

* * * * *

"Chop, potatoes, and a pint of bitter, if you please."

"The rest is silence," and gnashing of teeth.

IV.

A SHORT and easy journey landed Archie and his new master at their destination, a comfortable country house between Havant and Chichester; the only *contretemps* so far as "Davis" was concerned being that, as his master's luggage filled and indeed over-filled the dog-cart which awaited them at Havant, he had to leave his portmanteau in the cloak-room there, and with a light hand-bag to tramp the three miles and a half of country road between the station and Wilmersdon Court. While enquiring his way in the village of Wilmersdon, Archie chanced on a housemaid from the Court, one of his fellow-servants, as he owned to himself with a very half-hearted chuckle, and having obtained permission to escort her home, began, circumspectly and with no small misgivings as to his powers of properly sustaining his character, to pump his companion as to Wilmersdon Court and its inmates.

"And were many of the family at home?" he enquired.

"No, none! Indeed this is a party, as a body may say, Mr. Davis, without 'ost or 'ostess. You see Missus is a widow-lady, Mrs. Nonsuch, the Honourable Mrs. Nonsuch—very quiet and religious she is, and horse-racing's a thing she can't abide."

Archie duly agreed, but failed as yet to see what the fair Abigail was driving at.

"So at racing time," she continued, "the 'Sussex fortnight' they calls it, she lets the Court to six gents—your master and a lot like 'im."

"Nice crowd they must be," thought Archie.

"Half her year's rent she clears, I have heard, does the missus by that fortnight, and so she oughter; for, oh! Mr. Davis, the mess of it—smoking and drinking all over the place; the drawing-room carpet a mask of cigar-ashes, and brandies-and-sodas in all the bedrooms. Ah! it's 'ard on the 'ouse, and it's 'ard on the 'ousemaid; but then the rent's good, and the tips is good too, so neither missus nor us needn't grumble. And so you're Mr. Guinney's new man, him as keeps the tailor's shop and pretends to be a gentleman." ("Confound her, how did she know that?" thought Archie.) "Well, I think we'll get on

better with you than with his last Mr. Davis ; he *was* a disagreeable feller."

With such-like artless prattle did Miss Dinah Hopkins beguile the way and enlighten "Mr. Davis" as to his new surroundings. So instead of a quiet country-house, as he had expected, he was to find himself mixed up with a racketty party for Goodwood ; well, it didn't much matter to him, racing had never been to him interesting either as a business or a pleasure, and after attending a Derby and an Ascot Cup day, just to see what they were like, he had never felt tempted to repeat his visits ; he was therefore as likely to remain unrecognised on and near Goodwood racecourse as anywhere else, and that was now his chief care. When they reached the house, and the ceremony of introducing Archie to the denizens of the house-keeper's room was duly completed—

"Oh ! who—*who* do you think, Dinah," cried the cook, "come over here this afternoon, driving tandem, with his little tiger—that blessed boy, Tim, perched up behind—why that Mr. C'ruthers, him as was here last year, and they swore they'd never have again."

"He's a very nice gentleman," put in another fair domestic, "and they're all jealous of him, 'cause he's cleverer at cards than they are !"

"Clever ! Ah ! he's clever enough, is Mr. Stephen C'ruthers," retorted the cook ; "maybe he'll find himself too clever one of these days, if he's not careful !"

And Archie remembered himself, barely in time to stop an assenting groan.

"And he's brought his portmanteau, and invited hisself to come and stop the week," concluded the cook.

"But wherever's he to sleep ?" cried the housemaid, aghast at this piece of news ; "why the house is full as full can be. We can't build the man a bedroom."

"You're to put the light bedstead out of the old night-nursery where Mr. Guinney's sleeping, into missus's boodore."

"Ah ! well there now," said Dinah, "I had hoped to keep that room free of 'em, but it can't be helped."

"Never mind, Dinah," chimed in Carruthers' former advocate, "I'll lend you a hand to get the room ready ; and remember, he *is* a free one with his tips."

"And where are the tandem and the tiger?" asked Archie, in as indifferent tones as he could assume, yet with no little anxiety at heart; for though it was news to him that Carruthers possessed a tandem, or indeed any stable establishment whatever, yet he had a very distinct recollection of Tim, a cockney urchin as sharp as a needle, whom he had seen at Carruthers' lodgings on various occasions, and in whose society he foresaw that his incognito would run very considerable risks.

There was a chorus of "ahs!" and a consensus of opinion that "it was a shame," amid which Archie gradually learnt, to his intense relief, that the stables at Wilmersdon being as full as they could possibly hold, Tim had had to drive Mr. Carruthers' tandem over to Chichester and put up there.

"And now, Mr. Davis, if you'd like to see your room, and your master's; perhaps you'd better be getting his things out, for the dressing bell will go in half-an-hour."

It didn't take Archie long to see his own room, which just held the bed, the wash-stand and himself; it really seemed providential that he had *not* brought his portmanteau, there would have been nowhere for it to go. He could not help contrasting with the Spartan simplicity of his own quarters, the very comfortable appointments of his tailor's son, as he unpacked portmanteaux, boot-case and shirt-case, and littered the dressing-table with the costly fittings of his travelling-bag.

The great Mr. Guinney appeared as the dressing-bell rang, and commenced an elaborate toilette, whereat Archie gravely assisted, and indeed did the greater share of the work, for Mr. Guinney made a point of being as helpless as possible, holding apparently that if you have a servant, it is politic to get all the work you can out of him.

"You'll wait at table, Davis," he remarked, as he was about to go downstairs.

Now this was just what Archie did not wish to do; he was anxious to avoid Carruthers as much as possible, and not to risk recognition if he could help it; so he replied by enquiring, with due deference:

"In these clothes, sir?"

"Where are your other things?"

"In the cloak-room at Havant Station, where you had them put, sir."

"Then you'd better wait in those."

"Just as you choose, sir, of course ; but I don't know what the other gentlemen will think. To wait at dinner in a travelling suit is a thing I've never been asked to do before"; here Archie spoke the simple truth, an exercise to which he was becoming sadly unaccustomed. "I *have* heard, though of course I don't know, that it's occasionally done by the gentlemen of parties in trade, knowing no better, I suppose."

"Ah ! quite so, Davis, quite so. I'd forgotten your luggage was at the station," put in Mr. Guinney hurriedly, as he made his exit dinnerwards with some precipitation, leaving Archie, on that occasion at any rate, master of the situation.

A domestic servant on a visit leads a nice, easy, comfortable life, and Archie, having brushed and folded the great Mr. Guinney's clothes, and having cleaned and polished a pair or two of brown boots (no great hardship this, as it was a thing he had long been accustomed to do for himself), proceeded to spend the remaining hours of daylight in the kitchen garden, accompanied by his pipe. With no inclination for supper or for the society of his "fellow-servants," he wandered solitary through groves of currant-bushes, thinking it must be confessed of little or nothing ; true he had endeavoured to return to the old financial problem which had so exercised him at Waterloo Station, but he had found it grown so complicated by his master's payments to him, and his own disbursements on the journey, and also by his own prospective receipts in the way of wages that he had given the matter up in despair ; after all, what did it signify ? Fate had taken him in hand, and was dealing with him in a manner so stupendous that it was only waste of time and trouble to bestow thought on things utterly beyond his own control. Wherefore did he resolve, philosophically no doubt, yet in simple and un-philosophic phrase "to sit tight and let things slide." And so long time he wandered, oblivious of the clock, while the sun went down and the stars came out, and evening turned to night ; while ever as he came along that side of the kitchen-garden nearest to the front of the house, there came borne to his senses in the night-air the scent of cigars, the chink of glasses, the babble of small-talk from the card-table ; for the French windows stood wide open to the lawn, and Mrs. Nonsuch's drawing-room was receiving its annual *baptême de feu*, in the shape of smoke and speculation.

It must have been long past midnight when, as Archie returned from one of his peregrinations, he was met and surrounded by the entire female strength of the establishment, who came upon him, all talking at once after the manner of their kind, but with an earnestness betokening that something was seriously wrong. The result was confusing, until his old acquaintance, Miss Dinah Hopkins, managing to constitute herself the mouth-piece of the party, explained :

"We've come to ask you a great favour, Mr. Davis, and you must oblige us, now won't you ?"

"Oh ! do, do, do, Mr. Davis," cried the chorus, with all a chorus's unanimity.

"And what is it ?" says Archie, cautiously. "You can't expect me to promise blindfold."

"Ah, that's so like you gentlemen," quoth the cook archly. "You never——"

Further words were stopped by a tremendous peal on the drawing-room bell, which echoed down the passage to the back door—at which they were standing.

"That's what it is, Mr. Davis," continued Miss Hopkins, in an awestruck whisper, "the drawin'-room bell ; answer it for us, that's a good feller. Lor' knows them as is there ain't fit for respectable girls to go amongst, drinking and smoking, and card-playing as they've been from dinner-time till precious near daylight. It's more drink they want, I'll be bound ; we've put it all ready on the tray ; there it is, do take it in for us, Mr. Davis."

"Why can't the others do it that waited at dinner ? Mr. Spinks' man, or Captain Foljambe's, or Mr. Carruthers' ?" asked Archie, fencing with the matter.

"Mr. Carruthers ain't got a man with him ; we told you so !" wailed the chorus.

"And as for the rest," cried the cook, *con spirito*, "it's no use asking men to carry a tray of our best glass, who can't carry 'emselfes ; they're drunk, Mr. Davis—drunk and a-bed this hour or more ; oh, what would my missus say if she could see her house this day."

Here the bell rang again, and as the maids shrank into corners, and seemed strongly inclined towards hysterics, Archie thought it best to cut the matter short, by seizing the tray, and

making for the drawing-room, while he inwardly cursed his luck at thus being given another chance of recognition. His alarm, however, proved absurdly unfounded, indeed the room was too full of tobacco smoke to favour accurate observation, and as for its occupants—well, it was not the first time during the evening that that tray had been brought in with a full load, while the pile of empty bottles in the corner would appal Mrs. Nonsuch's simple domestics in the morning.

Cards were done with for the night, and were lying about, as Archie remarked to himself, when he found time, in the intervals of opening soda-water, to look about him, all over the place, on table and on floor, ditto cigar-ash, whereof Mrs. Nonsuch's carpet had received its full complement.

"Done pretty well, haven't you, Carruthers?" asked Foljambe, a trifle thickly, as he peered into the contents of his pocket-book.

"Not so bad," replied that worthy, as he shut one eye, the better to examine a very small memorandum book wherein certain abstruse calculations were scrawled in, it must be owned, very zig-zag fashion; the closed optic and a slight tendency to run one word into another were the only signs by which that experienced campaigner betrayed the warmth of that evening's work. "Begun the week very well," he continued. "At this rate I shall soon cease to regret the loss of my very dear friend Mr. Archie Butler, of whom an envious fate has bereft me."

"What, the amateur Mecænas! The milch cow!" cried two or three voices.

"Yes, the milch cow; lor! how angry he'd be if he knew anyone called him so; proud and poor, poor and proud; not a bad sort in his way—by no means ornamental, but very, very useful; I'll drink his health if anyone 'll give me another brandy and soda."

"But where's he gone?"

"Abroad; broke, and his people have got to look after him—lucky beggar to have people to do it. I haven't. Never mind, milch cow's dry, and so am I, and how much longer you're going to be over that drink I don't——"

Here Archie succeeded in opening half a bottle of soda-water down his dear friend's neck, which sent that worthy grumbling and hiccoughing to bed, grasping his winnings with one hand, and the banisters with the other, while the rest of the company

followed as they could, some little better than on hands and knees.

* * * * *

Archie was early up the next morning ; had his cramped apartment been twice as comfortable as it proved he could not have slept peacefully under the same roof as his despoiler, and as he paced the garden paths in the July sunshine, and looked up towards the room where Stephen Carruthers was probably sleeping a sleep quite undistinguishable from the sleep of the just, he acknowledged in the bitterness of his heart how hopeless a mess he had made of his affairs. That the man who had had the run of his cheque-book, with whose I O U's his pocket was crammed, should boast of the ease with which he had swindled him, should amuse a lot of drunken boon companions by calling him a milch—bah ! if he could only pay him out for it ! But he couldn't, and that being so, he would not stay another hour in Carruthers' neighbourhood—his fifteen and threepence would carry him to Portsmouth or to Aldershot, and if he must be in service, he would serve the Queen. So, with his mind set on taking the shilling, he ran upstairs and packed the hand-bag, which was all the luggage he had with him, and then proceeded to leave on the breakfast-table a note for Mr. Guinney, wherein he announced, without explanation or apology, his departure ; and enclosed to that gentleman the balance of his petty cash, when, just as he was leaving the house, unobserved, as he flattered himself, he was pounced upon for one last favour by Miss Dinah Hopkins.

"The boodore bell had rang twice, and, oh, would Mr. Davis be so very, very good as to answer it ?" so pleaded that fascinating damsel.

It was now eight o'clock, his master would not be likely to stir till eleven, just in time to drive to the course after a late breakfast ; those three hours would give him ample margin for retreat, less time would be wasted in doing this errand than in haggling over it with Miss Hopkins, so Archie hurried upstairs, and knocked at the indicated door.

"Come in," in the well-known accents of Stephen Carruthers.

Archie obeyed, keeping the open door well between him and the bed—an unnecessary precaution, as his "dear friend" was buried in the bed-clothes, and had turned his face to the wall, as

if the light were as hateful to him as theology teaches us it usually is to things evil.

"Brandy and soda—open it here, you know—no flat bottles for me."

Archie, suspecting what his errand would prove, had the materials ready outside, and produced them with commendable despatch. A shaky hand came forth from the bed-clothes to grasp the tumbler, and to return it, and then a voice—Carruthers' well-known voice, and Carruthers' well-known words :

"Want something for yourself, I suppose ; look on table in window, some silver there—take five shillings, ten shillings, what you think you're entitled to." And he turned over and rolled himself still closer to the wall.

"What I think I'm entitled to!" echoed Archie, speaking, in his impetuosity, more in his natural tones than he had been permitting himself to do during his brief experience of domestic service.

Carruthers was already half asleep again, but the tones of Archie Butler's voice must have reached and conveyed some associations to his drowsy brain, for he muttered to himself :

"Damned old milch cow ! Needn't think he's going to get anything out of me ; give him a bit o' breakfast, and let him go!"

Exasperation swept away any compunction that Archie might have felt at taking Stephen Carruthers at his word ; "take what he thought he was entitled to," *he would*, and with his dear friend's I O U's in his own pocket, and his dear friend's well-filled note-case on the table before him, it was easy enough to do so, and to leave ample record of the fact.

When the tenants of Mrs. Nonsuch's "desirable residence"—(*vide* advertisements)—assembled at the breakfast table a little before noon, Mr. Guinney found himself minus an invaluable body-servant, who had held that confidential post for some twenty-four hours ; but his loss was as nothing compared to that of Mr. Carruthers, who was minus the sum of £2,500 in Bank of England notes, being his winnings of the previous evening, and a considerable bit more, while, in their place, on his bed-room table he had found a neat little pile of his own I.O.U's accompanied by a polite note in the scrawling fist of Archie Butler.

For the first half-hour after this discovery, poor Mrs. Nonsuch's "boodore" was absolutely blue with blasphemy; indeed when the whole party assembled at the breakfast-table, later than was consistent with a punctual appearance on the course; things were far from gay, for there was little chance of their seeing the Sussex fortnight duly through, and Mrs. Nonsuch's prospects of getting her rent this year were sadly problematical. The situation standing thus—on the first evening of their tenancy Stephen Carruthers had won from the rest at various games of skill and chance their available and, in some cases, unavailable assets, to the extent of £2,000 odd, all which, and more also, had on the next morning been transferred, in manner above mentioned, to Mr. Archie Butler; who now, having picked up his portmanteau at Havant, and having *per contra* thrown away all thoughts of enlisting, was making the best of his way to Southampton to interview the owner of the *Lusitania* or his duly-appointed agents, as to the best and most expeditious method of rejoining his Uncle Ralph.

* * * * *

Who is this wandering guiltily along Southampton Quay as Archie appears to prosecute his enquiries? Not Uncle Ralph, surely? Yes, with equal surety, Uncle Ralph it is; two such bad hats cannot co-exist in Christendom; that they should have visited the same sea-port within a few hours of each other is beyond the possibility of chance. Uncle Ralph it is, in the flesh, and without doubt, who cuts short his nephew's stammered explanations with:

"Well, Archie, my boy, let's say no more about your being late for the boat, for the fact is I was not exactly in time for her myself—aye, lad, the *Lusitania* had sailed a couple of hours before I arrived; never missed a train or a boat in my life before!"

"Never too late to mend, uncle," Archie felt emboldened to reply. "It's worth waiting for the next boat, and paying our own passage if need be, for the sake of carrying into foreign parts a somewhat more profitable cargo than a bundle of my very dear old friend's I O U's."

At the Hands of Time!

IN that part of the country which forms the southern coast of the Principality, the service of a little church had just been concluded, and the congregation was gradually dissipating itself by means of the various exits from the environs of the building.

By far the larger number of people took their way by the main road leading to the village itself, and thus succeeded in encountering the nonconformists, numerically more important than themselves, who were also leaving their respective places of worship, and the former body endeavoured, by a more or less successful assumption of superiority, to palliate any unfavourable comparison that might have been based upon their contrast, in dimensions, to the latter.

The church congregation straggled a good deal, for a diversity of reasons. Local magnates lingered to confer on each other a weekly measure of recognition, a purely mutual proceeding, but valued in observance.

Lowlier folk whose dinners were a-cooking, and to whom in consequence the latter part of the service had been void of significance, bolted like rabbits away to their homes. Those to whom the possession of a servant rendered the consideration of appearances practicable followed less precipitately, and then came a few so very slowly that, by a process of deduction, they might have had no dinner at all in prospect. This theory became easier of acceptance as those concerned presented themselves to a closer scrutiny, for it was apparent that they were nearly all very old and very poor, to whom indeed, in spite of the hardest seats and the draughtiest positions in the edifice, allotted to them by the consideration of better favoured Christians, a few hours' quiet and comparative warmth, not to speak of some little dignity of association, meant something.

Last, in this particular instance, of the number was an old lady (it is unnecessary to qualify the term) upon the arm of a young girl. Both were dressed in black, the black that is such a faithful friend to the needy and yet withal respectable, and with the neatness which commands esteem and arouses pity.

The girl's companion leant heavily upon her, more by reason

of infirmity than mere age, and her face, when it could be seen, shewed that suffering was never very far from her; while the look that tenanted the girl's thin features would have made a self-respecting man sad within himself and without the courage to ask why it was there.

One denomination had ceased their efforts to look as little like miserable sinners as possible, and the others had exhibited the "devil's darling sin" to their hearts' content, before the couple described had made very much progress upon their homeward journey, and their slowness occasioned their coming face to face with a young man hurrying from the opposite direction, whose dress, bearing, and the books he carried, all shewed him to be a minister of some unpretentious sect.

"Good-day, Mrs. Corlan," he cried, as he lifted his clerical felt. "Better than when I last saw you, I hope? And Miss Corlan?"

"Mother isn't very well, Mr. Esven, thank you," replied the girl. "The weather's against her as you see."

"It's getting harder every day to wait the pleasure of the Lord," said the old lady in a despondent monotone, and drew her daughter's arm closer to her as a signal for the resumption of their walk.

"I wish it were only the weather that troubles them," muttered the young man to himself as he strode briskly on until a few yards of the road, and a short path at right angles thereto, brought him to the cottage which afforded him a home.

He went indoors, hung up his hat behind it, and was proceeding to put his books down on the table, when he stopped and looked wonderingly upon the sight that met his eyes. A man is not as a rule startled by his own dinner table, but any one who had seen Morris Esven at this time might have been excused for taking him to be so. Yet a roast fowl is not so very terrible a thing, especially when not overburdened with accompaniments, and the minister was soon reconciled with his surprise, and more indeed, for with a sudden energy he snatched up a basket from a chair near by, and fearlessly seizing the bird, and its meagre appurtenances, thrust it therein, covered it with a cloth, and bolted out of the house again with it.

It was more a matter of seconds than minutes, and he was out of breath in consequence, before he reached a boldly built but dishabilitated fragment of what had been a statelier building

in bygone times, the old local abbey to wit, and the lowly tenement he arrived at had doubtless formed some outbuilding in the original structure. Here he stood, hesitating at first to knock, then doing so inaudibly, and finally louder than was necessary. The door was opened by the girl from whom he had only parted a short time before.

"Oh, Miss Corlan," he began hurriedly, "most unexpectedly when I reached home, I found that my people"—(extempore creations)—"had—er—sent me a fowl or something of the kind, and—er—as you know I dislike—that is I do not eat—poultry, I thought that Mrs. Corlan might possibly care for a chicken. It might do her good," he added speciously.

There was the deliberation of refusal in the girl's looks at first, for she recognised the motive that prompted the offering, but two things weighed with her; one was the pain that her refusal would give to the kindly nature she had to deal with, and the other reason revealed itself to Morris Esven when he passed through the door that she almost mechanically opened for him, as with a few words of simple thanks she accepted the basket at his hands. Mrs. Corlan was sitting before the place where a fire should have been, and near a table prepared for the meal of herself and her daughter, and when the minister saw what was on the table he involuntarily formulated as fervent a prayer of thankfulness that he had acted on his most recent impulse as any that he had offered on behalf of his congregation earlier in the day. It might have been assumed that the table did not contain a repast in its entirety, but Esven had trained perceptions which were seldom at fault in the dwellings of the poor.

Almost every detail of the room, albeit he was studiously unobservant, appealed to him in connection with its occupants, from the shred-worn white curtains and the superannuated carpet, that still heroically attempted to disguise the self-assertion of a stone floor, to the polished but empty grate, and the one picture, a daguerrotype of a fine-looking man in some sort of uniform, that hung above it. He was glad, despite a certain pleasure in his situation, that he had no reason to stay, and when he had said the few pleasant things that suggested themselves to him, even going to the length of congratulating Miss Corlan on Church affairs, and in that way to his surprise seeming to please her less than by anything else he said, he took his leave.

He had re-traversed the greater portion of the road leading to his home when he noticed emerge therefrom a familiar and picturesque figure, his landlady in fact. She presented some of the appearances of an old woman, but with an inconsistent amount of activity. The edges of her brightly-tinted cotton dress fluttered in an impartial position between her knees and ankles, and she wore black stockings and shoes of a kind, and in a way, that might have been displayed more attractively by a maiden in her teens. She was covering ground rapidly when she espied the minister, and directly she did so she made straight for him and began to address him regardless of publicity.

"Good Lord, sir, the fowl's gone!"

He saw that he was at the commencement of a long explanation, if nothing worse, and, as he had done more than his wonted amount of prevarication for one day already, went straight to the point.

"Ah! yes, Mrs. Morgan, the fact is I have just taken it to Mrs. Corlan's."

"Then," said she, in a tone of incensed piccolo, "I'm goin' to fetch it back again," and she suited her action to the word.

The minister forgot decorum and just managed to catch her by one arm, and for a few moments the villagers, had they elected to avail themselves of the opportunity, might have revelled in the spectacle of a young and promising Calvinist divine doing a kind of giant stride business with a frenzied old female. The scene really had some points in common with a pantomime rally.

"For Heaven's sake, Mrs. Morgan," panted Esven, "give over and come indoors. I'll explain everything," and with some difficulty he persuaded the good woman to follow him into the house. Once inside she took up the matter again without delay.

"Well, it's too bad indeed, and you needin' a good meal as badly as any in the village! And what am I to say to Mary Jones when she asks me if it pleased you?" Here a faint colour showed itself in Esven's pale face, possibly from his recent exertions. "And she bringing it with her own hands, too, after you'd left for chapel! If it was giving it away ye were, sir, surely ye might have given to decent chapel people."

Here the minister saw his chance.

"We—er—should be at least, Mrs. Morgan, no respecters of

persons, and you well know it is my duty to think at all times, of others rather than of myself.

"Yes, indeed, sir, but not the same one every time ; and some one else with more than fowls that she'd like to give you !" The minister's manner discouraged her from the further prosecution of her last line of argument and she subsided abruptly, as was her wont, into good humour.

"Well, well, ye must have your own way, I suppose, and it's not for the likes of me to scold the Lord's chosen, but I'd like to see how you'll get the fellow of that chicken for your dinner to-day."

"I assure you, my dear Mrs. Morgan, that I have more than I want still here" ; and he turned to the table to find the best part of a loaf still remaining to him.

"Upon my word, sir, for you, with winter coming on, to talk of eating dry bread, and no breakfast to speak of this morning too ! Now you just come right along with me, sir, and have a bit of bacon with me in the kitchen, making so bold, but there's nothing better to offer you, more's the pity."

And glad to purchase peace at this price, Esven followed her to her abiding place in the room at the back of his own.

Some two years after their first arrival in the village, and shortly after the occurrence of the events above recounted, the darkest of their days began for Mrs. Corlan and her daughter.

The mother as might have been expected grew weaker, and there were no means at her daughter's command of fighting the progress of her enfeeblement. She soon became unable to leave their room, and the walks to and from the church were at an end. This meant little to the girl, but very much to the elder lady. In the former case a sensitive temperament escaped something of humiliation by evading, in one instance the weekly inspection of an insolent and vacuous idiot with an eyeglass, who, from the standpoint of self-instituted local importance, had been wont to annoy her ; or, the not ill-intended, but insufferably offensive, scrutiny of the ladies of the district. Moreover, a certain bitterness of thought, gradually acquired, had estranged her from profitable reflection on religious matters. The iron had bitten slowly, but deeply into her soul.

Teaching and sewing, two eminently respectable and equally unremunerative employments, constituted the means of the

two women's subsistence, and an occupation which fails to provide the absolute certainty of some sort of food from day to day cannot afford much dignity or satisfaction to those who follow it.

Cheap is nasty, and Mrs. Corlan, who had never eaten much more than necessary to keep body and soul together, when in health, could take very little when ill, and the girl was broken-hearted at her failure to obtain what was necessary for her mother. She began to think that if death was to come to them, it had better do so without a foretaste of abasement and suffering.

One evening when she had offered the sufferer the little she had, which the poor lady tried to touch but could not, Ethel Corlan had turned away, stifling a sob, to put the plate she had in her hand on the table, when there came a knock at the door. When she opened it, she found standing outside an old woman who lived close by, how none might say with accuracy, but palpably by the charity of those around her and some intermittent fillips from the parish. As it was, she was shivering in the cold and carrying something hidden under her cloak.

"Listen you now indeed then, Miss Corlan; it's a bit of hot meat that the people on the hill ha' sent me down, as they do now and again, you know, and, says I, Mrs. Corlan would like it perhaps; and you mustn't take it ill, Miss"—for she misread the face before her, "for we all know how that——"

The good old creature stopped as Ethel put out her hand, and was preparing to deliver her little gift when the girl at last managed to speak.

"God bless you, Mrs. Rees, for your goodness, but my mother can eat nothing, so you see it would be no use my taking what you so kindly offer, but I shall never forget what you have done. Thank you again and again!"

As the old woman turned to go, the newspaper covering her offering fell to the ground and blew into the room; and as Ethel came back from the door she took it up and sat with it in her hand at the table. She was too tired and wretched just then to even think, so she sat crying silently. Presently, however, her eyes fell on the paper before her, and some lines that caught her eye led her to read on.

Under a heading referring to America, was detailed the purpose of one of the Southern States to compensate and pension the widows, in poor circumstances, of such of their officers as

had held certain rank in the recent war. It set the matter out clearly, and when she had finished its perusal Ethel looked across to where her mother was dozing and then up to the portrait over the mantel piece of the soldier there.

She considered for a few moments, and then, when she heard a child passing the house singing, she went to the door and called softly. A sturdy little chap came out of the darkness in response, and touched his cap to her.

"Willie," she said, "will you do something for me?"

"Yes, indeed, mum!" said Willie.

"Then just run back to Mr. Esven's and tell him that I and my mother would be very glad if he could come round to us. Do you understand?"

"Yes, mum!" and he was out of sight at once.

While she waited for Esven's coming she read the paragraph again, and brought a small desk from the back of the room and opened it; by that time Esven was knocking for admission in a startled sort of way, and as he came into the room she hastened to reassure him.

"Mother is no worse," she said. "It's quite another matter I want to see you about. You'll forgive me for troubling you, won't you?"

There was more than forgiveness in the look that Esven gave her as she went on with her story in a low tone.

"You are the only friend we have had here, and I know I can speak to you in confidence. Although I think you are unaware of it, we are Americans; before the war, in a better position than I can now trust myself to think of, in the southern state of South Carolina. The war ruined us. Not only was our property destroyed, but every male relative we had was killed sooner or later in the struggle. That must sound very strange to you, but there were many with us at that time. My father's last instructions to us were to leave the country, if he fell, and the cause seemed likely to fail, so, when he was killed, fighting under Lee, with the little money we had we left America as soon as we could.

"This was the only spot in this strange country of which my mother knew anything, and that only on account of one of her school friends having come from here, so we came here and you know all I can tell you further of our lives. Now I happened a few minutes since to see in this paper that our State proposes to

compensate the widows of its officers. My father was Colonel Corlan, and for mother's sake I feel I ought to do all that's possible in the matter. For any other reason, God knows I should not have the heart to try!" and she covered her face with her hands.

Esven caught up the paper and read rapidly, his surprise vanishing in enthusiasm as he did so.

"No time must be lost," he said at last, when he had finished. "Give me all the information you can, and collect everything you have in the way of papers; certificates and such like will be of the utmost importance, and I will draft your claim as soon as ever you can instruct me sufficiently."

They went through the papers together for nearly an hour before the minister looked up from his notes to the girl opposite him.

"Have you a portrait of Colonel Corlan?"

She pointed to the only picture the house afforded.

"That is my father," she said gently.

"You must spare it to me," said Esven.

"Oh, I cannot indeed. If mother were to notice it had gone she would be terribly upset, and I dare not run any risk of disturbing her."

"It seems to me of the utmost importance, and for your mother's own sake we must neglect nothing."

After a look to where her mother was sleeping quietly, the girl went to the fireplace, and taking the picture from the wall handed it to Esven, who extracted the little central portrait, and the frame was restored to its place not so very noticeably changed in appearance.

"Now," said Esven, as he collected his notes and stood up ready to go with them, "we have enough for a commencement, and I will run in to-morrow to the American Consul and put the matter before him. That is the first step."

"I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Esven, but it is late in the day for me to begin doing so."

"Miss Corlan, anything that I might be able to do for you would be very small in comparison with my wish to serve you."

And the girl looked troubled as she gave him her hand before he carried his papers away back to his rooms with him.

The American Consul, in one of the two chief mineral shipping towns of South Wales, was apparently dealing with an accumu-

lation of documentary work when Esven was shown into his office the next morning and proceeded to state the nature of his errand.

"I come," he began, "to lay before you a claim on behalf of a widow and her daughter, Americans, for a pension, in view of the fact, as is stated in our leading papers, that it is the intention of the State to which they belonged——"

"Bunkum! my dear sir," interrupted the Consul. "Pardon my interruption, but 'tisin't fair to let you waste your own time and mine over it. I saw the notice you speak of, and dropped to it quicker than you could be expected to. Elections are queer things in our country, sir, and this is one of their children, I guess."

The papers he was preparing to open fell from Esven's fingers, and he looked as if he was about to follow them on to the carpet. It was bad enough to have his enthusiasm blighted, but when he thought of Ethel Corlan, and of the poor soul dying for very want of what might have been justly hers, he turned sick to the very heart with disappointment. He took out his handkerchief and wiped his forehead and his lips feebly, and then sat for a time in speechless despondency.

"Come, come," said the Consul at last, moved at the sight, "don't take it so sadly; though it's a cruel shame, I admit. What rank had your man?"

"A colonel, sir," said Esven. "I have the whole matter here," picking up his papers.

"Well, leave the papers here, if you like. It's just possible, mind I only say possible, that this matter may be dealt with in the future, and if you like to leave your statement, I'll file it. That's all I can do, sir," and he rose to indicate the close of the interview.

"Then I will thank you and accept your offer, sir," said Esven, laying his papers on the table, and, taking up his hat, went sadly out into the street.

The Consul got up and walked to and fro, with his hands in his pockets, frowning.

"Poor devil," he muttered to himself. "He looked mighty sick. Good-looking fellow, and seemed bright too. Well, no help for it!" and he went back to his desk and did some more work. Half-an-hour or so later he rose up again, and, in a fit of

abstraction, took up Esven's papers to put them aside somewhere.

In doubt how to dispose of them he strolled to the window, and carelessly opening them began to read. In a very few moments his demeanour changed, and taking both hands to the sheets he read on eagerly till, flinging them down abruptly, he went hurriedly to the door.

"McShane," he called out. "Here, quick now! Get the 'Lost Citizens' folio," he continued, when his clerk came in, "and look up 'Corlan,' and tell me where to find Legation correspondence for April last."

The clerk promptly produced first some files of letters, and then a large leather-bound volume with an alphabetical index, which he proceeded to examine, whilst his superior tossed the letters one from the other in his search. The Consul found what he was looking for first and read it out.

"Here we are, 'London Legation,' 'Endeavour to acquire, and in event of success notify to this office, any information anent Mrs. Rone Corlan and her daughter; the former lady widow of Colonel Corlan, late of 3rd Reg. Louisiana Infantry. These ladies are supposed to have landed in Liverpool about October, 1865. From that time unheard of to this date, April 23rd, 1867. Cable information without delay to Madrone, Lower Broadway, New York.' Now what have you got?" and the clerk took up the recital.

"Required, any information relating to Mrs. Rone Corlan, widow of Colonel Rone Corlan, 3rd Reg. Louisiana Infantry, and of their daughter, Ethel Hayes Corlan, who left America with her mother about the middle of September, 1865. Believed to have landed in Liverpool.' Here follow descriptions of Colonel Corlan, his wife, and daughter.

"Any information to be cabled to Edgar N. Madrone, Lower Broadway, New York, and therefrom reported to head quarters of Legation. April 28th, 1867.'"

"And here we are in October! Give me that picture—that's the dead colonel right enough. Now send this cable right away," and the Consul drafted a lengthy communication.

"It'll come pretty high this, I guess, as a cable, sir."

"A man of fifty million dollars don't look for a mean cable when he's been waiting as long as Madrone has for news. Send

it off now while I get a report off to the Legation. When you've sent it, get up to the railway station, it's on your way, and look out for a man dressed something like a clergyman, about five feet ten, clean shaven, dark, large blue eyes, and looking mighty miserable; bring him back here if you find him; if not, I must mail him to-night."

So the clerk went off, and the Consul sat down again to write.

When Morris Esven left the Consulate he walked slowly away down the street without any immediate purpose. His emotional temperament rendered him open to sudden accessions of enthusiasm or deep depression, as the case might be. Under the shock of his failure he was almost in a condition of nervous collapse, and could hardly bring himself to face the prospect of his return with the news of the fiasco.

He drifted along, hustled by the people, until he found himself staring absently into the eyes of a flashily-dressed girl, who laughed rudely in his face as she pushed by him. Then he realised that he had nothing remaining to him to do but to get back to the village, so he turned his steps to the station. Full of his project he had started away in the morning without eating a proper meal, a common indiscretion of his, and when he reached the platform he found himself feeling drowsy and weak. The crowd appeared to swing to and fro before his eyes, and every now and then to go round him in a maze. He stood still and tried to pull himself together; then seeing a porter close by, made towards him, but the platform seemed to rock under his feet as he neared the man.

"Kindly tell me—" he murmured, and concluded his sentence by pitching abruptly into the arms of the astonished official.

"Here, blow it all, hold up!" exclaimed the man. "Poor beggar!" he added a moment later, "he's bad, no mistake—and I thought it was drink too!"

He propped his burden up against one of the iron columns on a portmanteau, and looked round for another like himself. A group formed round and stood glaring at the sufferer, without offering any sort of assistance, till a tall member of his own calling, who had caught a glimpse of the white face in passing, shouldered his way through them.

"Good Lord! it's Morris Esven!" he said. "Here, catch hold, my man." And lifting him with the porter's aid he soon

had him in a carriage, and was driving him away before he had sufficiently recovered to recognise an old fellow-student and friend.

The clerk from the Consulate subsequently spent a good hour-and-a-half in and about the station looking for Esven, searching in and out of rooms and offices, and failing to identify his man with the clergyman he was told of as having been driven away in a fit, in his own carriage.

He waited until the occupants of the place had changed themselves several times over under his eyes, and then went back to the Consulate and reported his lack of success.

Another hour passed, and the Consul was preparing to leave for the night, when a telegraph boy put his head in at the door, tendering the customary yellow envelope. It was, to the Consul's astonishment, a reply to his cable. "Address Madrone, Langham, London," it ran, and the Consul knew that the famous millionaire was in England.

He sat down and compiled a comprehensive message to the address given, and sent the patient clerk out with it to the telegraph office. Then, feeling satisfied with the measures he had taken, he went home.

When he went down to his office the next morning he found a business-like looking man, anything between forty and fifty, in the middle of books and references with the clerk. The stranger turned to him as he came in.

"Consul, I guess? Glad to meet you, sir. I'm Abel Driffin, Mr. Edgar N. Madrone's agent, and thanks to your man here, with pretty well all the information I want just at present."

"And Mr. Madrone? Still in Town, I suppose?"

"No, sir. About a mile from here, in one of your very ordinary hotels, and just starving for these facts I've got here."

"Can I be of any further service to Mr. Madrone in this matter?"

"I guess not, sir. I imagine he'll be moving right away for these ladies in an hour from now. You see, he's lost four years in this affair, and don't reckon to waste any further time, so we came down by night mail, sir, and I'm not sick with sleep. I'll borrow this little picture, sir."

With that he whipped out into the street with all the briskness of a man who had passed a good night's rest.

The period of Esven's expedition to the Consulate was a cruel one for Ethel Corlan. Mrs. Corlan's strength failed rapidly in the course of the day and the night that succeeded it, until her daughter was face to face with a trouble of which she had deferred recognition, hoping against hope.

The dying woman spoke little, and took little note of her surroundings, after the occasion of Esven's night visit.

In the morning the doctor, who had come and gone almost silently, stayed somewhat longer and spoke to Ethel in a way that took the last remnant of heart out of the girl.

"I will come back again, shortly," he said, "and bring a trustworthy woman with me, who will stay with you."

"Oh, I think I can do everything mother wants alone," she pleaded.

"But she must come, for you will need her. I shall be here too."

She grasped his whole meaning, and sank down sobbing beside her mother, who heard her and, with a great effort, stretched out her hand until it touched her daughter's head. Just then the doctor thought he saw a shadow fall athwart the light from the doorway, and attributed it to his eyes, which were in an unwonted condition, but then he heard a tap upon the door itself, accompanied by an enquiry in a clear, low voice, while a tall figure almost filled the opening.

The new comer let his eyes travel over the room; he saw the doctor, the sick bed, and the girl near it, and when he saw the latter he came straight from where he was and stood over her.

As she rose he took her hand and led her to the light of the window, and she stood looking up to him with her tear-worn eyes.

"You are, surely, Mr. ——" she began at last.

"No! I am Edgar Madrone—and you are mine. Aye! surely my own from that hour five long years since, through all that dreary, hapless time to this. Mine, I say, mine! Oh, my love, could you not have known it for all that I might not speak then? My darling, we owe each other very much!"

She could not reply, but when from out the sea of misery and woe that raged around her, he rose up, a rock of succour and defence, she did not turn from him.

He drew her to his side, but with a fresh burst of lament she

moved towards her mother, and he followed, still holding her hand in his. They knelt together beside the bed, and he bent his head with hers down to the dying, who slowly opened her eyes and saw them there, aye, and knew them, for though she failed to understand, yet she let a smile grow upon her features which death did not afterwards efface.

Outside, meanwhile, Mr. Abel Driffin, with characteristic self-possession, was confronting, with his thumbs in the arm-pits of his waistcoat, a number of untidy, wide-eyed children, whom he anticipated in the indulgence of a curiosity, shared by their mothers in the distance, as to what was passing within.

He had stood there for some time, holding the children by the magic of his eye, when his attention was drawn from them by the approach of the tall, slight form of Morris Esven, between whom and the door Mr. Driffin immediately interposed himself.

"Pardon me, sir, but I don't believe they're quite fixed up for a reception in there. My young, wealthy, and emotional employer is engaged there, and I reckon he's not prepared to include you and me in his arrangements!"

Esven stared at him in blank amazement, utterly at a loss for a reply, until the doctor, emerging from the house, grasped the situation.

"A friend of Miss Corlan's," he said to Driffin, as he shook Esven meaningly by the hand, and passed on. The agent stood aside with a suave bow, and Esven walked on to the doorway and walked in. He must have been still weak despite a night of care and attention, or his rapid walk from the train had told on him, for he reeled and caught at the framework of the door for support as he looked into the room.

The hour for prayer had passed, and that of sorrow held its place, for they were risen from beside the bed and stood once more by the window; she crying quietly upon his shoulder, while he, with his arms around her, was kissing her reverently but again, and again. There was naught between them, for they were gathering their first meed of mercy at the hands of Time.

Morris Esven turned from the sight with that in his heart which appalled him; a passion that he knew indeed must die, but only to leave him with a future empty of aught but loneliness and despair.

The Counsel of Myronides.

By ST. JOHN E. C. HANKIN.

I, XEINILOS the Athenian, was one of those who were sent out from Athens with a troop of Hoplites to garrison Plataea when the Thebans had already made an attack upon it, and the Peloponnesians were preparing to besiege it with all their forces. There were three of us in command of the Athenian troop, myself, Cratylaus and Timon, but Timon had been slain in an assault on the walls by the Peloponnesians before the siege became a blockade.

Cratylaus, then, and I had command by rotation month by month over the Athenian contingent, while of the four Plataean commanders similarly two commanded each month, giving place to the other pair as the month ended.

Now, Plataea had endured a siege many months, and the garrison had begun to feel the stress of famine, although all who could not aid in the defence had been removed to Athens before the siege began. I Xeiniilos, was in command of the Athenian force for the month, and of the Plataeans, Myronides and Cheiron were generals. We had made the circuit of the walls, to see that all was secured and guarded lest the enemy should attempt a night attack. From the walls we could see the siege-works of the enemy and the sentries pacing to and fro on them or standing guard on the turrets, for though it was winter the night was clear and starry. When, therefore, we had made our circuit of the walls and seen that all was safe, we sat down beside a watch-fire to discuss the best method of continuing the defence before we slept, as was our wont. For by now the garrison was growing daily weaker, and we were in great fear lest the enemy should carry the city by a sudden assault from every side, for the walls were of great circuit for a small garrison to defend. We had decided to strengthen the guard at one part of the wall, and I had gone to give the order. When I returned I found Cheiron and Myronides discoursing, not on the best means of defending the city, but on some philosophic question, the nature of happiness, I believe, and when I came back they bade me join in the discussion.

"You," they said, "come from Athens, the most learned as well as the most beautiful city of Greece. Tell us, therefore, what the temples and statues of Pheidias and the instruction of the sages have taught you concerning happiness. Where is it to be found and wherein does it consist?"

"I have no knowledge of these matters," I said, "neither do I consort with Sophists and such like babblers, to discuss these questions. Every man knows his own idea of happiness, and what more can he want that he should go to a teacher to learn it? To most men life is happiness, the life of a free Greek, a true Athenian. To such death is unhappiness, the black shadow that falls across a sunny path, blotting out the light of Heaven so that after it men must for ever walk in darkness. And though an honourable death is a thing which some men pray for, yet can they never quite desire it, seeing it must needs be an end to all the joy of living, and the portal of that dim Hades beyond the sunlight and the sea. But you, Myronides, have talked with him of Abdera, Protagoras, and have heard his wisdom. You then should be more able to expound these matters."

"Truly," said Myronides, "I have heard my master discourse of many such things, and indeed, it was to sit at his feet that I came first to Athens, where he was, from my native city. But I came not to learn to speak of these things, but rather to listen. For I am not skilled to theorize of such matters, but can only hear what others declare, and try by this means to gather truth."

"Suppose then," said Cheiron, throwing himself down upon the stone terrace on the wall where they had been standing, and resting his head upon his hands, while the cold rays of the brilliant moon poured down upon him. "Suppose we should, each of us, tell the history of some man who, we think, in his life found happiness, that so, by comparison, we may discover perchance what is the nature of happiness. Begin, Xeinilos, and tell us of the life of a man whom you deem happy."

"Well," I said, "it is a hard thing to find one. For, of our great and glorious men at Athens, Miltiades was not happy in the manner of his ending and Themistocles died a traitor in a foreign land. Aristides was ostracised, and Pericles, who died but now, fell into disgrace before his death, and was only restored to honour and favour with the people at the last. Truly may we say with Solon 'Call no man happy till you have seen

the end of his life.' Yet, if I must tell you of any, I will choose one who did not attain to such honour as these, but nevertheless lived not without glory—Gorgias, the Athenian, who won the Olympiad, and was honoured with great rewards by his countrymen; also he led the Athenians to battle twice against the Phocians, and was both times victorious. He had four sons, tall and strong, who were themselves men of power and renown, and he had great store of wealth all his days, and when he died—for all must die at last—he was borne to the pyre by his four sons, and the Athenians built a monument over him in his honour."

"Nay, you ask too much," said Cheiron, "wealth, victory at The Games and in battle, sons straight and tall. Verily, if happiness cannot be without all these, let us be content to say that, like the Phoenix in Arabia, it appears but once in a hundred years. I call the Spartan Leonidas happy who died for his country, to whom the lion is dedicated at Thermopylæ, or Peisistratus, your tyrant, who, though for a time he endured exile, nevertheless ruled over a great city moderately, and got himself great wealth and fame. Ay! any man possessed of moderate wealth in a free city call I happy, though his fame be never heard beyond his city walls. Be not so exacting, Xeínilos, else shalt thou find but little happiness to bless thee in this world of ours."

"I knew a man," I said, "who had a fair house among the hills of Attica, who dwelt among his olives and his vines unknown and at peace, whom the fierce tides of war passed by unnoted, whose wife was chaste and loving, and his children obedient. It was the life of an ox at the stall, waxing fat for the slaughterer, Death, but of a certainty he was happy enough, and well content. But thou, Myronides, hast thou found happiness so rare a thing, or dost thou agree with Cheiron here, that to live is happiness, to feel the sun on your face, and the sea-wind in your hair, and walk free and unfettered among the hills of Greece? Wilt thou bring the goddess down from Heaven and set her among men, or wilt thou enshrine her in the clouds as I have done, where few can attain to her?"

"Happiness," said Myronides musing, "is declared to be only possible where there is wisdom, and seeing that wisdom is rare, happiness must be rare also. Nevertheless, there are brave men

who have this wisdom in some sort intuitively, and every warrior dying for his country hath this wisdom and this happiness."

I leaned back in the shadow of the parapet and gazed upon his face in the full moonlight wondering.

"Nay, surely death can never be happiness," I said. "Dying is ever painful and the dark terrible. An honourable death is a fitting close to an honourable life, but the happiness is in the life and the after-memory of it, not in the death save as a fit conclusion of it. But give us an illustration of thy theory. Tell us of one man whom thou hast known who seems to thee happy that we may convict thee, by thy friend's case, of folly."

"I had," said Myronides, "a friend and companion in arms, one Tolmides, the son of Sophron, who, journeying through Thrace to the estates which his father had in the Chersonese, found certain robbers carrying off a Greek maiden to their den for ransom, having borne her away from the fields near her city. He then, being a brave man, set on them, slaying one and wounding another, but was himself hurt unto death in the fray. The third robber then fled to the mountains, leaving the maiden, and she returned to her father's house. But Tolmides died where he fell and was buried by the maid's father, none knowing his name nor the name of his city, among the mountains of Thrace."

"Truly," said Cheiron, raising himself to gaze at Myronides, "thou canst not call such an one happy. I would call him the most hapless of mortals, who lost his life in an unknown quarrel for a maiden whose very city he knew not; who met with the rites of sepulture and the funeral pyre at the hands of strangers, far from his native city in barbarian Thrace. Verily, a dog's death for so brave a comrade! Rather would I die fighting for my country among the hills of Greece, since die we must, than fall by a robber's hand among the savage passes of the North. Nay, I would rather die ingloriously at home among my women and my slaves in the house of my fathers. But how wilt thou make good his claim to happiness for Tolmides? Tell us how."

"To every man, if my master spoke truly," said Myronides, "his own heart dispenses happiness or misery. Who, when he declared that 'man is the measure of all things,' seems to me to have taught that none but the man himself can declare with certainty whether his own lot be good or ill, his own deeds good

or evil, whether his life be happy or miserable. Man it is that can decide what is right and what is true *for man*, for absolute truth and absolute happiness there is none. Things are good and evil but as they seem to the actor in them. The warrior therefore who prefers death to dishonour—to him death is good, to the coward always evil. Both are right and judge according to their natures. To the ox, the eating of the grass and the chewing of the cud is happiness, though he be but fattened for slaughter. For so it seemeth to the ox. He knows no pleasure but such as the belly gives him. So it is with some men, as the Gnostic poet has said :

“ All we, like swine for death, are penned and fed,
And without reason all to slaughter led.”

But such are not the lives of all, or perhaps we might bewail ourselves as of all things most miserable. Man is happy providing he is approved of his own soul. The wise man will not be careful how he is approved of others, nor to have a tomb among the great ones whom his countrymen delight to honour. He will be content if, by his deeds, he can satisfy his own soul. Therefore to the life of the senses alone the wise man will never turn. Tolmides then, in that he fell bravely in delivering a maiden from the ravisher, was happy though his countrymen should never know of his courage, nor the maiden sing the praises of her deliverer's name. For few happy men come out of king's palaces, or have their fame noised abroad in their own land.”

“ Myronides has learned his master's lessons well,” I said. “ But now we should be consulting for the safety of the city, not discoursing our Philosophies. For the garrison grows daily weaker and no aid comes from Athens.”

And Myronides turned his dark eyes towards Attica, and said sadly :

“ Ah, faithless Athens, though it drained thee of thy last soldier, of the last drop of thy heart's blood, yet shouldst thou not have left Plataea to her fate ! If there were but ten men in thee of fighting age yet shouldst thou have armed thy old men and thy children, thy very women also, and marched to relieve Plataea. If they had died and thou hadst fallen, death is not so terrible. But now must thou face dishonour ! ”

"'Tis pity truly," I said, "but what shall we now decide on? Shall we try a sally and see if by any means we may break a way through the enemy's lines and fly to Attica? Better to die in the attempt than linger here to starve."

"But the siege works are strong," said Cheiron, "and the number of the besiegers great. There is no hope that we, weakened as we are, could get safe through the midst of them. Let us rather consult about a surrender upon terms. Perchance Lacedæmon will show us mercy seeing that Plataea was of old specially honoured of her for her prowess against Persia. Who knows but she may save us out of the hands of Thebes?"

"Nay," said Myronides, "The Lacedæmonians are cruel foes, and show no mercy to the vanquished, and even if they saved us alive, they would put to death our allies, the Athenians, which would dishonour us who surrendered the city. But I have a plan which might deliver us its defenders though it could not save the city. Let us, seeing that it is now winter, choose a dark and rainy night when the sentinels have taken shelter in the towers of the siege works, and scaling the walls silently and in darkness, make our way to Athens, leaving the besiegers but an empty city to capture. If we are discovered, we can but return to the city as we came and there await the end, and if not, we might perchance get such a start of any pursuit as would make it impossible even for the Theban horse to overtake us. All would depend on secrecy and silence."

Cheiron and I agreed that the plan was good, but though I knew that the Athenian detachment would be ready to make the attempt I feared lest the Plataeans themselves, some through fear and some from love of their country, should refuse to desert their city. However, we agreed to propose the scheme on the morrow at the Assembly, to see how the citizens and the remaining Plataean generals, Bion and Thrasyllus, would receive the plan. For by now the provisions were almost exhausted, and many of the garrison were sickening from want and continual toil.

The next day therefore Myronides came forward and explained his scheme to his assembled people.

"Citizens of Plataea," he said, "you know, all of you, how that we have but little food left in the city, and you know also that in this war the Lacedæmonians have shown themselves

merciless to the conquered, putting the prisoners to death and casting out their bodies to the kite. Seeing then that there is no hope of the city being relieved from without, it behoves us to consider how we are to continue to withstand the enemy. For when there is no mercy in the besieger the besieged should take measures so as either to die fighting or to break through and escape. For starvation is a dog's death. We then, your generals, have agreed upon a plan by which the city may be saved—not its walls and temples, but the men in it, for wherever there are citizens there is a city, and if we can escape from the besiegers, we can readily build us a home elsewhere and Plataea rise again. We then consider that by night it would be possible for us all to make our way over the enemy's lines and escape to Athens. For, seeing that it is winter, the nights are dark and the air of Bœotia is ever thick and misty in winter.”

At this a murmur arose from the assembly, part applauding the suggestion, part dissenting, for a citizen ever clings to his city and will not desert it even when hope is gone and no course remains but surrender or flight.

“Seeing then that this seems to us the only remedy for our present evils, let us even put it to the vote whether the plan be adopted.”

Then the eighty soldiers of Athens, who had assembled with the others to hear the speech of Myronides, stood apart, while the Plataeans voted whether they should stand their ground or attempt to escape. And when there was a show of hands there appeared to be many more in favour of clinging to their city and holding it to the death.

Then again Myronides rose and proposed that those who approved his plan should, together with the Athenian detachment who had already signified their approval of the scheme, make their way over the enemy's besieging works and leave the rest to hold the city while they tried if by any means they could stir up the Athenians to march with all their forces to the aid of Plataea. There would thus be fewer mouths to be fed among the besieged, and yet enough men to garrison the town, for the Peloponnesians no longer attempted to storm the city, but were content to sit down before it and starve the garrison into submission. Thus there was hope that the remnant of the citizens would be able to hold out till help came from Athens, and if

not the garrison could surrender at last, as they must do one day anyhow, if no help came from without.

To this proposal the assembly agreed, for so little provisions now remained in Plataea that every man would vote for a scheme which lessened the number of mouths to be fed. So it was agreed that on a dark and stormy night, when there should be no moon, the attempt should be made, and thereupon the assembly dispersed.

I, Xenilos the Athenian, who saw these things, was also at the council of the generals held after the general assembly. At which council it was found that whereas the people were divided concerning the scheme, the generals were unanimous in their approval of it. But, seeing that it was necessary that one, at least, of the generals of Plataea should be left in command of the city, and seeing that it was illegal to elect a new general save at the proper season, a dispute arose as to who should be left behind in Plataea to conduct the defence, while the others, if they succeeded in breaking through the lines, urged the Athenians to march to the relief of the city. And when the question was being hotly debated and no one appeared willing to remain, Myronides, who had been standing apart, gazing out over the wall across the lines of the siege works, turned to the others and volunteered to remain. So it was decided that he should stay in the city and direct the defence, and he began to explain in detail to the rest of the generals how their escape was to be accomplished. At the same time he added to the general scheme a further part, which contributed largely to the success of the whole, namely, that he, with a large contingent of Plataeans, should make a feigned attack on the siege-works on the opposite side of the city towards Thebes, and light fires on that side and make a great din and commotion with a running to and fro of torches to distract the besiegers and confuse the sentinels, so that they should not perceive in the darkness the real movement of the besieged, which would be on the opposite side of the wall towards Attica; so that, he hoped, the besiegers would mass themselves on the Theban side of the siege-works, while the Athenians and Plataeans escaped by the other side.

When then, five nights later, a great storm of wind and sleet swept over Plataea, and no moon shone, the Athenian contingent with a force of Plataeans, to the number of about one hundred

and forty, lightly armed, and some of them even without shields, started forth silently, walking some distance apart to prevent any clank of spears one against another.

Now the manner of the besieging wall was this. There were two walls encircling the city, built of brick, about sixteen feet apart. This space was roofed over to provide lodging for the besiegers. At every tenth battlement upon the wall there was a tower filling up the space between the two walls, and there was no way round these towers, but only a passage through them. During the night then the soldiers, when it was wet and stormy, were wont to leave the wall and keep guard from the shelter of the towers, which were not very far from each other and were covered overhead.

The Plataeans and Athenians therefore set forth on this night on the side of the city opposite Athens, singly and stealthily, with the right foot unshod so that they should not slip in the muddy ground. Moreover, they brought with them light ladders which they had made, measuring the length of the ladders by the number of the bricks in the siege wall, for the wall was not plastered so that they could count the bricks from their own wall. Selecting then a point of the wall midway between two towers, they climbed up upon it in the inky darkness carefully and without noise, amid the drenching rain and howling wind, the men below holding the shields of those who climbed, and afterwards handing them up to their comrades. And all might have got up in safety and descended unperceived on the other side, had not one of the men in climbing his ladder, displaced a tile which, falling with a noise, alarmed the guard. A tumult immediately arose among the besiegers, who, though they heard the sound, could not see for the darkness where the enemy might be. Also the people in the city began at this time to make a feigned attack on the opposite side of the wall, thus drawing away the attention of the sentinels from the true point of attack, and when the besiegers lighted fire signals towards Thebes to signify an attack, the Plataeans in the city also lighted fires, so that the Thebans were unable to understand what was meant and did not send aid till the fugitives had got safe away to Athens. Nevertheless, some few of these at this time lost heart and returned to Plataea.

. When all the men had climbed safely on to the wall, the

ladders were lifted up and put down on the outer side, while the besiegers were still in doubt what was happening, and where to concentrate themselves. Most of them were still devoting themselves to withstanding the feigned attack on the opposite side of the wall. Still men were posted by the fugitives to guard the passes through the towers, on each side of the part of the wall where they were, lest the enemy should attack them un-awares while they were descending on the outer side.

At length all were safely over and were beginning to cross the ditch on the further side, when a large party of the besiegers came up bearing torches. And here was the greatest difficulty which they had yet had to encounter, for the ditch was full of water from the rain that had fallen, and thinly coated with ice from the cold, so that it was difficult for a man to cross. The enemy ranged themselves on the further side of the ditch and the position seemed perilous to the men who were trying to escape. But the torches which the enemy brought proved destructive to them and advantageous to the Plataeans, for by means of them the Plataeans could see those who carried them, while the torch-bearers in the darkness and the wind were blinded by the glare of their own torches, and as they peered into the blackness afforded an excellent mark for the weapons of an enemy they could not see. For the light of a torch cannot penetrate the darkness for more than a circle of a few feet, while it shows the holder plainly.

We, therefore, by the light of the torches, got safe across the ditch and rushing upon the enemy, hurled our spears upon them, thrusting at their faces as they showed in the flaring, yellow light, while they had to strike at random at the darkness, and could do us little damage. Finally they turned and fled, and we, refraining from pursuit, began our retreat to Athens, choosing first a road leading towards Thebes and then turning by an unfrequented path towards Attica. Athens we reached the following day at dawn in safety, for the fortress at Deceleia had not yet been built by the Lacedæmonians.

But not even then did the Athenians march out with all their forces to relieve Plataea, and after a short time the city surrendered to the Peloponnesians, who put all the Plataeans to death and razed the city to the ground. The city surrendered upon terms that every citizen should have fair trial for his life, but the Pello-

ponnesians put to each of them but one question : " Whether he had done anything during the war to help the Lacedæmonians ? " When none could answer " yes," they were all put to death.

But Myronides, seeing that no aid came from Athens and that all the city were beginning to talk of surrender, took with him the boldest of the garrison and those who preferred death to the doubtful mercies of Lacedæmon and the vengeance of Thebes, and, leading a desperate assault on the besiegers, slew many of them, and finally fell with all his comrades in the *mêlée*. The next day Plataea was delivered up to the Lacedæmonians, but Myronides had already attained to happiness after his own manner.

A Consular Tour in Galicia.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE JUBILEE YEAR FÊTE OF SANTIAGO (GALICIA) 1880. ALSO A DESCRIPTION OF A BULL-FIGHT.

ON the 7th of June, 1880, I started with my husband, who was appointed by the " F. O." to visit his different vice-consulates in Galicia and Asturias ; of these two provinces he is nominally consul-general. We left Coruña in the s.s. *Araucania* for Vigo, touching at Carril, one of the most delightful short trips I have ever experienced. We dropped anchor for a few hours only at Carril, feasting our eyes upon the surroundings of this beautiful harbour, where in some points the trees grow down to the water's edge.

Carril has its English associations ; here anchored Nelson more than once with his squadron. From Carril to Vigo, where we were welcomed by the vice-consul with his own boat, "*à la* man-of-war," and conducted to a good hotel, "The Continental." This hotel is in the hands of an intelligent company, one of its members has lived in England some years, surely hence the reason of the advancement in general comfort, as compared with other hotels in the north of Spain.

Vigo is a quaint *little* town, beautifully situated, surrounded by mountains, the shape of which reminded me much of

Switzerland, indeed, I have heard since that Vigo is styled the "Spanish Switzerland," also "the garden of the north of Spain." The Vigo bathing arrangements are most excellent. The day after our arrival we visited the vice-consul's country house. Steaming up the bay in his (the vice-consul's) steam launch, with friends, passing the "lazaretto," also the point where a chain was once kept as a safeguard against the passage of an enemy's fleet; steaming past the spot where Drake attacked the combined French and Spanish squadron laden with doubloons from South America; finally dropping anchor in a quiet little nook, here, after a short scramble, we found a carriage awaiting us, and were driven a distance of several miles to the picturesque residence of Senor B——, an old feudal domain, somewhat undersized. The time passed happily, strolling in the garden filled with choice flowers and shrubs, then a champagne luncheon followed; bouquets of flowers were presented to the guests by an old French gardener, who had served under Napoleon the First, a literal case of "turning the sword into a pruning-hook;" then home to the hotel. The day which had been so fine and warm changed in this most capricious Galician climate to rain and positive cold, but, I think, we were all too buoyed up with pleasure to feel actual discomfort.

I must tell you that we arrived in Vigo in time to see the town in its gala dress, *en fête* in commemoration of a victory over the French. This *fête* takes place annually, and lasts about three days. Really, one night the little town was quite resplendent with its illuminations, the promenade decorated with flags and flowers, gay with the music of its band, and filled with smartly-dressed promenaders.

From Vigo to Pontevedra, and Carril by diligence, a charming drive. In Pontevedra we stayed some hours to give time for my husband to drive to Marin to visit a vice-consulate there. Marin is a small and uninteresting place. From Marin, *en route*, returning to Pontevedra we stopped at the estate of Don Montero del Rios, over which the vice-consul is agent; here we found luncheon prepared for us, and we were most hospitably entertained. We were much charmed with the plants and flowers, with the aviary, etc. Here I left with a lovely bouquet of flowers.

From Pontevedra we hired a carriage to Carril, passing the

ruins of el palacio de los Churruchaos, of the thirteenth century, with its battlements and tower. This palace was taken from its former lords, and ceded to the archbishops, as a penalty for those nobles having murdered the primate Don Suero de Toledo by order of Pedro the Cruel. Pontevedra is picturesquely situated, and has some fine views. Carril is far more imposing from a sea view ; the charm, to a large extent, vanishes at a nearer approach. Carril has its one old inn, but how terribly the interest of any sight in Spain is depressed by the adjuncts of the swarming beggars, dirty in its foulest sense, mutilated, exposing their sores, crying loudly for relief. One's heart aches to *do something* but the mere doling out of a pittance is not enough ! The vice-consul for Carril, who travelled with us as secretary, had written to a quaint little inn at Villa Garcia a small town adjoining Carril, making all arrangements ; here, we were received as his guests. How snug we were ! Here, let me whisper into your ear, the owner of this said little inn had lived for ten years in an English gentleman's family as factotum.

I am almost forgetting to tell you how beautiful the drive is from Vigo to Pontevedra and Carril, a drive of about eight hours by diligence. The scenery is very varied, at all points the eye is pleased by artistic bits.

From Carril to Santiago, pausing at Padron to spend a few days with Mr. and Mrs. M——, long resident in Spain. Our friends (the M——s) went with us to Santiago, which we reached the second week in July. Mr. M—— undertook to be our guide in this old city. As we neared Santiago the first object which met our eyes was the convent of San Francisco, lying in a complete hollow ; the line of railway takes a circuit the last few miles ; it appears to the eye as though this convent were multiplied by at least four ! Then loom out the towers of the cathedral, a cathedral of which northern Spain is justly proud.

Santiago is very picturesquely built upon an uneven site. The town is full of arcades, rather reminding me of Chester ("The Rows"), has numberless fountains, abounds in scallop-shells in rude carving, has a *triste*, far-away-century look, and is eminently depressing as a whole. Santiago or St. James, so named after the Apostle St. James the Elder, also called "Compostella," "Campus Stellæ," because a star was supposed to have

pointed out where St. James's body was concealed. Santiago, it is said, dates from the eighth century, one could imagine this by its general mustiness. Santiago seemed to me to be the Galician stronghold for priests and superstition. The cathedral is very imposing inside, rich in carvings. The Portico de la Gloria, is indeed most beautiful as a work of art. As the South Kensington Museum contains a complete cast of this portico I will not stop to describe it.

Of course we visited the Relicario. Amongst the relics we were shown "one of the veritable thorns out of the crown of thorns!" When the case was put into my hands I innocently asked "where the thorn was?" I could not realise that the large relic shown was the one; it resembled the tooth of a tortoise-shell comb!

How we walked, talked, and examined Santiago—visiting its library, visiting its blind, deaf and dumb asylum. At the latter institute we were entertained by the blind with a musical concert, then watched an examination of some of the deaf and dumb. Poor boys!—how intelligent some of them were! what pains their gifted teacher gave! Then came an examination of some of the blind; one youth wrote down our visit, etc., while we were there. The loss of sight always seemed to me to be one of the most terrible afflictions "our mortal flesh is heir to," and yet when I heard these boys play on different musical instruments, and watched the deaf and dumb boys' blank faces, dead to sound, and to harmonious sound, say is it not hard to choose? Surely we, who have the use of all our senses, should "praise God continually!" I spoke to the master of this asylum, a most intelligent, liberal-minded Spaniard; his yearly income is £20—not much, you will say. "No." And think what daily labour is required! I should have liked to have left behind us a liberal wealthy Englishman's sum to be distributed amongst the boys; however, we gave what we could, and our friends added to it. I have often thought many things seem hard upon a consul; here is an instance. A consul travels, he is expected to drop coins, so to speak; he is received well at an institute, his sympathies are aroused, he is expected to give, and he knows his own pay in most cases is so small for the position to be maintained that he "halts 'twixt two opinions."

And now, with sight-seeing and interests of various kinds, we

were approaching the opening day of Santiago's Jubilee Year Fête, and were somewhat easily persuaded by our friends to out-stay the event. And so the 24th of July came upon us, and Santiago began to "wear another dress." The hotel, which had been drowsy and sleepy before, awoke to noisy life, the *triste*-looking streets echoed to the monotonous monotones of chanting pilgrims; many of these pilgrims were mere children. These devotees were dressed in capes and hats ornamented with scallop-shells, and carried the pilgrim's staff. These processions were accompanied by priests and nuns. Then would pass crowds of gaily-dressed worshippers, making a picturesque contrast to the pilgrim garb.

The jubilee year attracts hundreds of devotees; it takes place when the 24th of July (St. James's Day) falls on a Sunday, then the "Santa Puerta" (holy door) of the cathedral is opened by the Primate himself, with a great deal of ceremony; to pass through this door is to insure numerous indulgences—so say the faithful. All this takes place in the nineteenth century!

I must class my description following the Spanish programme somewhat. The morning of the 25th opened with the firing of 21 guns, beating of drums, and martial music; then followed a visit to the cathedral by the Civil Governor of the province, accompanied by the authorities, corporation, etc., preceded by mummies. These mummies, or giants, are most grotesque-looking; there is a light framework surmounted by a mask, each giant or giantess dressed corresponding to the figure-head, for instance an African in African costume. Men support these frameworks, having a loop-hole for light and air; the whole is most absurd as a mummy show, but when connected with religion the thoughtful mind must surely revolt from the exhibition.

Spaniards tell us this giant show is a most ancient custom, and the different characters are to represent the coming of all nations to worship. There is the Englishman in a wide-awake hat, eye-glass, frock coat and gold-headed cane, the mask of a ruddy colour. Then came the "*funcion religiosa*," at which we were present. During the "*funcion*" the large "*incensario*" or "*Bota fumeiro*," which hangs under the noble cupola dome, swung backwards and forwards. It is swung by an iron chain, first in a slow, gradual movement, then the impetus gains, until

the looker-on is made almost giddy through watching it. Clouds of perfumed wreaths rise and fill the dome, and the effect is singular. The "Bota fumeiro" is said to be two yards high.

Part of the sacred programme included a procession of the officiating clergy, etc., the image of the Apostle was carried round the cathedral. The orchestra played the "Sochantres," followed by a motete, "O beatum Apostolum." Then came the offerings. The Civil Governor gave into the hands of the officiating priest the King's offering, who, as the programme said, "following the pious custom of his illustrious predecessors, makes to the patron of Spain"; next His Eminence the Cardinal Patriarch of the Indies and their very excellent Señores the Archbishops presented respectively, in the name of their Majesties, Don Alfonso XII. and Doña Maria Christina, and of their royal parents, Don Francisco de Asis and Doña Isabel II., and of S. A. la Serenisima Señora Princess of Asturias' particular donations. "These royal personages made their offerings to the visible protector of the Spanish nation, in testimony of their profound gratitude and veneration." The ceremony concluded with a papal benediction, the organ then rolled out its grand sounds. A "Kyrie," the "Stabat Mater," rang through the sacred building.

You will naturally want to know what is expected of a pilgrim. He must wend his way to the altar dedicated to the ancient image of Santiago and embrace the saint; ascending some steps behind the image, he places his hands on the shoulders and kisses the hood, to quote from "Murray's Handbook of Spain." This osculation is essential; it is called "el fin del Romaje" (the end, the object, of the pilgrimage). The pilgrim next proceeds to one of the "Confessourez" and confesses, then he is assoyled, communicates, and receives his certificate, or, as it is called, his "compostella." This is a printed Latin document, signed by the canon, "Fabricæ Administrador," which certifies that he has complied with all the devotional ceremonies necessary to constitute a "Romero," a real pilgrim. "This 'compostella' was often deposited with the family title-deeds as a voucher of the visit, as otherwise lands under certain entails could not be inherited." The steps leading to the altar are literally worn by the feet of generations of pilgrims.

Part of the pilgrim programme this year (1880) was to visit a newly-made tomb to Santiago, the bones of the said saint having lately been unearthed by the archbishop, to be placed in an elaborate sarcophagus; flights of steps lead to the weird-looking place, the vault being dimly lighted with oil lamps. The image of Santiago is gothic, of stone, painted and gilded, and is covered with ornamentation; the image is seated, it wears the pilgrim's hood and esclavina, and holds in its left hand the bordon, or pilgrim's staff, with a gilt gourd or calabash fastened to it. Mass can only be said before this image by very High Church dignitaries; on grand occasions as many as seven officiate.

During this Church festival the beautiful collection of tapestries was hung in the cloisters; some were so vivid in colour, so exquisitely, finely worked, the eye was almost deceived into believing they were paintings.

On the 26th the first bull fight or fights took place, eight bulls condemned to death. Will you believe it? I was over-persuaded to go "if only for a short time." I never saw a gayer Spanish crowd than the one we encountered hurrying to the Plaza de Toros, a crowd dressed in its best. The sight which burst on our eyes upon entering the rudely-built amphitheatre was certainly unique. Could it be possible that these refined-looking women and daintily dressed little children had come to sit for several hours quietly to watch animals tortured to death! An essential part of a lady's dress upon this occasion is a fan; these fans, gay in colour and fanciful in design, were a curiosity in themselves; a band of music was playing lively airs.

The arena destined for the courses is surrounded by double barriers, between which runs a circular passage. The amphitheatre has its pit and boxes; in the centre box sits the president. The proceedings opened with a procession of the performers. First four mounted spearmen, "or picadores," followed by the "chulos" ("banderilleros"), or attendants on foot, six in number, the rear being brought up by the two espadas. Their light, active figures were displayed to the best advantage in gaily-embroidered jackets of different coloured silks, or velvet, bright-coloured hose, buckled shoes, and wearing the small black Montera hat. Their long black locks, taken from the brow, were fastened in a knot at the back of the neck and secured by

a silken net. The chulos, whose business it is to distract and irritate the bull, carried under their arms capes or mantles of various coloured silk. The procession was closed by a sort of hurdle, dragged by four mules, decorated with crimson tufts, and having bells attached to their harness. This mule team, "el tiro," was destined to remove the dead horses and bulls killed in the courses.

After the procession had passed the president, a trumpet sounded, a gaudily-dressed horseman, "alguacil" (his costume was the traditional Spanish cavalier style, velvet mantle, plumed hat, etc.), came forward, bowed to the president and asked permission to open the "toril" (bull's cell), the folding doors of which were opposite the principal entrance; a key, ornamented by ribbons, was thrown to the alguacil, who caught it in his hat; he handed the key to an attendant, he himself riding out of the ring at full speed, amidst the shouts of the assembled community.

The different performers now took their places, the drama commencing with the picadores, who were mounted on the most wretched-looking horses; the poor animals had their eyes heavily bandaged. The picadores wear the broad-brimmed Thessalien hat, their legs are sheathed in iron greaves covered with leather, which gives a very heavy look; they carry long spears, offensive and defensive weapons. A signal was given, the doors of the toril were thrown open, and out rushed a bull, a noble-looking animal, his back decorated with a bunch of ribbons. When halfway across the arena, he stopped short, seemingly startled by the shouts of the spectators, and by the hundreds of faces that met his gaze. The poor brute's fury was soon aroused by a thrust from the lance of a picador; then commenced furious onslaughts, seven horses were killed in an incredibly short time; as each picador was unhorsed there were cries of "Mas caballos, Mas caballos!" more horses, more horses! cries often issuing from the lips of dainty-looking Señoritas; if a horse is merely wounded the gash is stopped up with tow, and the horse is beaten on again.

Don't think I quietly watched all this; my curiosity was painfully satisfied at once. My husband gave me a signal, when I could look from behind my fan, but I saw one poor picador tossed with his horse; it was done in a moment, and then a

horrified fascination made me watch on ; horse and rider lay on the ground, the picador drew the horse's head a little over him as a shield, for I suppose he knew by a sort of instinct the bull would charge again. When a picador falls he is unable to rise unassisted, owing to his weighted legs. There came a thrill of horror ; the bull bent his head to gore the man, when, quick as lightning, one of the chulos sprang forward, and threw a cloak over the bull's horns ; the picador was immediately dragged over the barrier. The president was informed that the picador had dislocated a shoulder in his fall, and was sent to the hospital. Universal dissatisfaction was expressed *that there was a picador less*.

The second part of the performance rests with the chulos ; a trumpet sounds, the picadores leave the field to the chulos. I could look up with very different feelings now the horses were gone. Feats now took place—human skill against brute force. The chulos went right up to the bull, holding small barbed darts called *banderillas* in their hands, which were ornamented with cut paper of different colours, these they threw into the bull's neck the moment he stooped his head to toss, *they* nimbly springing to one side.

The last part of the bull-fight rests with the *espada* alone, there are always two *espadas* in case of accidents, but the *multum in parvo* rests with one. The *espada*, "Cara-Ancha," fenced with the bull with his long Toledan blade held in his right hand, in his left he waved a red flag ; after this had continued for some little time, the *espada* asked permission from the president to kill the bull ; this being granted, he thrust his sword between the bull's shoulders. Instantaneous death is as a rule the result of this thrust, but in this case the bull fell on his knees to get up again, amid the hisses of the on-lookers at the *mal-coup* of the *espada*.

The bull was baited for several minutes, when a merciful thrust ended his life and his sufferings. (While the poor animal was in the full vigour of its strength, many and loud were the cries of "bravo-toro !" "buen-toro !" at each deadly thrust of his horns into the poor horses). The team of mules then entered, the dead bull was carried out at a rapid gallop. The arena was re-sanded, all traces of the recent conflict being completely obliterated. Immediately a second bull entered. I was

now impatiently waiting for an opportunity to escape, the wish was carried into execution, from seeing a picador ride in on a horse wounded in the former fight, so *grievously* wounded, its *entrails trailing on the ground* ! Fancy the sufferings of the poor beast during the long intervening pause ! The arena swam before my eyes ; a few minutes and I was outside, carrying with me a vivid, horrible dream, carrying I think a solution of *why* so much *wanton* cruelty to animals exists in Spain ! I was told before the bull-fights were over another picador had a serious fall and was supposed to have been killed ; there was no pause in the mad excitement. We enquired later on at the hospital, the last mentioned picador had received a severe concussion of the brain ; he eventually recovered. Bull-fighters originally wounded to death were denied burial rites, as dying without confession, but I understand in the present day a priest is always in attendance with the Consecrated Host ready in case of need.

I observed in a note to the programme of the bull-fight, that, should a bull prove cowardly in returning a charge, "*banderillas de fulgo*" were to be thrown into the neck of the bull ; these are the arrows or barbs before described, provided with crackers which, by means of a detonating powder, explode the moment they pierce the poor brute's neck. Surely "the inventions of man *are* cruel !"

These bull-fights lasted three days, *eight* bulls were killed the first day, *six* the second, *four* the third day. I need not tell you that *my* experience ended with the first day. I lately came across Byron's terse but true description of a Spanish bull-fight ; first canto of "Childe-Harold," the opening stanza (the sixty-eighth):

" The Sabbath comes a day of blessed rest,
 What hallows it upon this Christian shore ?
 Lo ! it is sacred to a solemn feast :
 Hark ! hear you not the forest monarch's roar ?
 Crashing the lance he sniffs the spouting gore
 Of man and steed o'erthrown beneath his horns.
 The throng'd arena shakes with shouts for more,
 Yells the mad crowd o'er entrails freshly torn
 Nor shrinks the female eye, nor ev'n affects to mourn."

The opening day of the Santiago bull-fights was destined for a Sunday, but the weather threw the arrangements a day later.

Towards the close of the week's *fête* we again went to the

amphitheatre, this time to witness a very different scene from a bull-fight; a *torneo* (tournament), in imitation of the middle-ages, was held there. The effect was exceedingly striking, the evolutions of the horses well sustained, the costumes and accoutrements most brilliant. It really was a very imposing sight, watching from the amphitheatre balcony the approach of the carriages occupied by the Queen of the Tournament, and her court, escorted by the knights.

Santiago, the last three nights of her *fête*, was resplendent with illuminations. While wandering about the streets during this time (the illuminations), I observed how very many of the poor visitors to the shrine had literally "nowhere to lay their heads," the pavement in retired nooks swarmed with sleeping men, women, and children. What strange infatuation!

The festivities at an end, we started for home, *vid* Carril, this time in an English-built steamer sailing under the Spanish flag, originally called the *Princess Alice*, an old Calais and Dover boat, now the *Mendez Nunez*. With her change of flag, she has lost her English cleanliness. Although the captain's cabin was reserved for us, I was thankful the trip was a comparatively short one. Then the Spaniards are universally bad sailors, and suffer, groan, and sigh, making the evils of *mal de mer* more terrible than ever; Coruña was hailed in health and safety, and a hearty welcome from home, soothed for a time the memories of a bull-fight!

LOUISA M. RAWSON-WALKER.

A Cornish Maid.

BY BARBARA LAKE,

Author of "THE BETRAYAL OF REUBEN HOLT," "A PROFITLESS QUEST," etc. etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN INTERRUPTION.

DOORS and windows on the line of route were all crowded with those who, from one cause or another, were unable to go to the church. The situation was naturally gratifying, and the wedding-folks approaching the high bridge were just beginning to perk and plume themselves on their imposing appearance, when, following the bridegroom's example, they suddenly came to a halt.

Every face fell and every eye quailed, as if before some terrible and blighting presence; for there, in the very centre of the bridge the gay little group was about to cross, stood Clem Freer.

The women of the party began whispering to each other excitedly, while over the bride's face there crept a slight access of pallor. She betrayed no other sign of emotion, but though Mary, slipping a reassuring arm about her waist, felt her shiver, there was a gleam of stubborn resolve in her dark eyes as she dropped them to the ground.

Laying a detaining grip on his shoulder, Will Ashdown muttered in the miller's ear that it was too late to permit anything in the shape of interference, and that he must put on a bold front. For Tom Penrose was not famed for reckless bravery, and, on catching sight of Clem, he had shown unmistakable signs of an inclination to retreat to the rear of the party.

Meanwhile, Clem Freer, who also had come to a sudden halt, stood gazing down at the gaily-garbed wedding-party with a face that was almost deathly in its anguish and despair; and, for a full minute, he and they both kept their respective stand-

points — seemingly doubtful as to what would be their wiser course of action. Then Clem, taking the initiative, strode forward, and casting a glance of scorn at the miller (who, wriggling himself free of Will Ashdown's grasp, was edging back out of harm's way), he took possession of Jenny's passive hand, and turned to address her disconcerted followers.

"Old friends and old neighbours," said he, "doesn't it strike you as being hard on me that I should come back amongst you to claim my own, and to find you all doing your best to rob me of it? But I'll not press my question, for I don't want to keep you waiting longer than need be; but I've got that to say to this bonny bride which must be said, before you take her further on her way."

"Oh, come, Maaster Clem Freer," cried Jenny's father, starting to the front, "'tis all very foine for you; but us ha'n't got no toime to stan' coolin' our heels, whoile you go perlarv'rin' wi' my daughater! The days be gone by when you had t' roight to claim spache o' she, an' you'ud best get baak the ways you came, so faast as may be!"

"Your advice is good, I make no doubt, Mr. Caerden," returned Clem, grimly; "but by your leave—or else without it—I'll say my say to your daughter, before I take one backward step."

"Will 'ee though!" fumed Mr. Caerden, who was alarmed lest Clem's inopportune appearance should delay or prevent a marriage to which he had looked forward with so much satisfaction. "Us 'ull see about thaat, woan't us, neighabers?" turning to his eagerly-listening companions. "Us bain't goin' to be set asoide by t' loikes o' he, be us?"

"No, us bain't," came the response from two or three masculine tongues, albeit the words were anything but heartily spoken.

"He'd need be a bold man and a strong that tries to stay me!" cried Clem, his eyes flashing ominously. And he drew Jenny's still unresisting hand on to his arm.

"Oh, there's plenty o' us boald enough, an' strong enough, too, for thaat matter," retorted Mr. Caerden excitedly. "Here, miller—where t' deuce be un?—oh, there you be. Come here"—catching the quaking bridegroom by the arm, and beginning to drag him forward—"come an' stand up for your roights!"

"Roights be hanged!" exclaimed the miller, flinging his prospective father-in-law off. "I shall stand up for my roights when I choose to it, and I sha'n't stand up for 'em when I doan't; and now you know all about it!"

"But whaat's to be done?" asked Mr. Caerden, backing a little, and casting around a look of half-helpless entreaty; while Will Ashdown stepped up to Clem, and spoke a few expostulatory words.

"Freer," said he, laying a hand on his old adversary's shoulder "take a bit of friendly counsel, and don't lay yourself open to, rough usage. Or if that argument has no weight with you"—for Clem had flung up his head in scornful contempt of the advice—"just try to consider this poor girl's feelings, and don't make her more unhappy than need be on her wedding-day. It is too late to prevent the marriage, and it would only be a kind act on your part to let us pass peaceably on to church."

"That's as may be," retorted Clem; "but since it means handing my promised wife over to the tender mercies of yonder mean, cowering scrunt, Tom Penrose, I have my doubts about the kindness of the act. Anyway, I don't intend to do it till I have had a few minutes' talk with this pretty bride; and if you don't bear malice for what passed between you an' me some time back, *you* will be doing a kind thing, Ashdown, in keeping these fine folks off till I've had my say to her."

"I couldn't keep them off," returned Will.

"Try it, anyway, so as to give me a little time; for I don't mean to be baulked of my will. Why, look you here, now. Before I went to seek my fortune in London I offered to give my Jenny, here, her freedom, and she wouldn't take it. No, she promised to be true to me, through good and through ill, through absence and silence; and before I let her pass away from me for ever, I mean to know what's changed her."

He had spoken rapidly, almost breathlessly, all through. Indeed, the whole scene had taken less time to enact than it has taken to tell; and, as he uttered his last sentence, he backed a few paces, drawing Jenny with him.

"Now, just you look there, Penrose!" cried Mr. Caerden, again gripping the miller by the arm, and pointing towards Clem and Jenny. "Whaat be 'ee thinkin' on to let yon upstaart chaap

walk off wi' your broide loike thaat? I 'ud go an' fling un in t' river if I was you!"

"Hold your blust'ring tongue, Caerden, can't you?" cried the miller, in nervously-angry tones. "Let the fule o' a chap have a few minutes' speech wi' your daughter. Can't you see, from t' looks o' her face, that her doan't mean to stand none o' his nonsense? Keep yourself quiet a bit, do!"

And the miller's reading of Jenny's expression was a shrewd one; for, though she continued to respond, passively, to Clem's movements, the dogged resolve on her countenance was a faithful interpretation of her inmost thoughts. Yet, when taking advantage of an excited consultation that followed on a few words of Will Ashdown's, Clem drew her away from her friends, she made no resistance, but suffering her hand to remain on his arm, walked steadily by his side as he led her to the middle of the bridge. Once here, he turned so as to face her, and, taking both her hands in his own, he began chafing them tenderly—for they were cold—striving the while to look into her downcast eyes.

But she knew, only too well, what effect the misery and reproach of his gaze would have upon her, so she steadfastly avoided meeting it; and after a few moments of painful silence, Clem spoke.

CHAPTER XX.

A REJECTED PRAYER.

"JENNY!—can this really be *my* Jenny?" asked Clem, in sorrowful tones. "Can it be the little maid I thought so tender and so true? Oh, my little girl, what has changed you? Why is it that you have treated me so badly? Won't you speak to me, dear? Surely, surely it cannot be that you have given the love that was mine, only a few months ago, to yonder poor, limping miller! No, no; it needs no denial from your lips to tell me that, and I will not believe you would fling me aside for sake of any bit of money he may have hoarded up. No; you have been over-persuaded to wed him, for the good of others, my pretty darling—you have been over-persuaded by them as should have known better. Give me but a word to tell me this is true. Give me only a look that shall tell me you are not

casting me off of your own free will, and no earthly power shall part us! What! not even a look, Jenny?"

But no. She was resolved not to be betrayed into speech, and neither a word nor a look would she yield him. In truth, she knew that to do so would be to lose control of herself; for her heart was pleading for this discarded lover, with far more persuasive eloquence than he knew how to employ in his own cause, and she would not listen to its appeal.

"I don't know what I've done that you won't even speak to me," Clem went on, with a heavy sigh. "Maybe, I was to blame for ever leaving you, but I thought I had only to get to London, and I should win wealth enough to wed you in no time. You know how sure we both were of it, Jenny. But I wasn't long finding out my mistake; and if I didn't write to you after this, as often as I might have done, 'twas because I couldn't endure to think of your having to share my bitter disappointment. Then came my accident, and I couldn't write, being too ill. Yet I never doubted but you would understand there was something amiss with me, and I sent you two long letters as soon as I was able to get about—letters which you never answered."

"Aw, but I never had they letters," cried Jenny, forgetting her resolve to keep silence, in her anxiety to seize on the opportunity Clem's words gave her of saying something in justification of her conduct. "How could 'ee 'spect me to answer letters I never got?"

"You might have written to ask *why* you never got any."

"Iss, so I might, I doan't deny; but," putting on a show of resentment, "I didn't git a line from 'ee, for more'n four long months, Clem, an' 'tisin't likely I was goin' to write an' ask 'ee why 'ee was so neglec'ful. You ha' bin mistaken i' t' maid you so lightly left, if you thought tha' o' me!—sadly mistaken."

"So it seems!" retorted Clem, with a grim little laugh. "But—fool that I was!—I trusted my letters to another's hand to post, and it was only a few hours ago I began to suspect they hadn't reached you. Still, you had one from me yesterday?"

"Iss—'tis true I did; but 'twas too late then, to alter things."

"Would it have altered things if it had reached you sooner?" eagerly.

"I—I doan't know. I can't tell—i'deed I can't!"

"Oh, Jenny, 'tis hard to think you could give me up for so small a cause as a bit of unexplained silence! And weren't you silent, too? Why, yes; but I did not doubt your truth—I could sooner have doubted my own. But tell me—if you had got my letter a week ago, would it have stopped this mad, this cursed marriage with Tom Penrose?"

"Awh, what's t' use o' askin' sech a thing, now. But—waal, no—I doan't b'lieve it would!"

"Is it that you have ceased to love me, Jenny?" he asked, in stern but half-wondering tones. "Can it be that your heart has turned from me to yonder pitiful piece of deformity?" jerking his head towards the bridegroom, who stood amidst the group of wrangling wedding-guests. "Lift your eyes fearlessly to mine, and tell me 'tis so, and I will trouble your peace no more. I will leave you, without another word—never, never to look on your false face again."

But though Jenny's inclination was to cut the trying interview short by uttering the falsehood put into her mouth, her eyes and her tongue refused to second her will; and, instead of replying to her lover's adjuration, she held her peace—her pretty head drooping lower and lower on her bosom.

"No," cried Clem, as, in a sort of ecstasy, he drew her hands up to his throat and held them there; "no, my darling, you cannot, will not, utter the lie. I knew, I knew you wouldn't! Oh, Jenny, your love is mine—still, still mine, and my life, my heart, my very soul is yours. Don't cast them from you, dear. Don't, don't barter them away for a wretched handful of perishing gold!"

"Can 'ee gi' me as gran' a home as t' miller can, Clem?" asked the girl, in a low, steady voice, though the tears had welled up to her dark eyes, and were beginning to roll unheeded down her cheeks. "Can 'ee gi' me t' walth an' ease I ha' allus pined for?"

"No, Jenny, I can't do that," returned Clem, sadly. "I can't yet make such a home for you as Tom Penrose can; but if you'll bid him leave you—if you'll let me take the place he's waiting for in St. Marg'ret's Church, I will strive as man never yet strove, to make you contented and happy. I will make up to you, in love and devotion, all you may lack by loss of the miller's gold. You sha'n't want for anything, dear—no, not even though I myself should starve to gratify your wishes!"

"Aw, 'tis folly to talk so, Clem," cried Jenny, recovering her composure a little, and freeing her hands from his clasp. "'Tis rael folly. 'Sides, I can't change things now. I can't bid t' miller leave me, an' I can't let 'ee take un's place i' t' church. I couldn't do it, an'—an' I woan't. 'Tis too late for it—more'n too late!"

"'Tis not too late," cried Clem, passionately. "It shall not be too late. If you loved the miller, I might—nay, I would—go my way and leave you in peace, though my heart should break with sorrow of the parting. But shall I suffer you to go to his arms without a bit of love in your heart to comfort you? Shall I suffer him to take you from me while your love is mine? No. By the God that made me, I won't! Oh, my pretty darling," catching her to his breast, in a paroxysm of tender impetuosity, "bid the poor craven miller take himself off, and let me be your own loving Clem, still. Look at me, Jenny—lift your head and look into my eyes, and tell me, then, if you can part from me—never to meet again, this side the grave. Oh, my love, my love, give me the right to hold you ever thus on my breast, and you shall find it a safe and sure refuge from every storm of life. Let me but claim you as my own—let me become your husband, now—to-day—in place of Tom Penrose, and it shall go hard with me if I don't win the wealth you desire."

With what anxious vehemence he poured out his pleadings—with what rapidity—with what despair!

Ah, the pity of it that, he should have loved so faithfully and so fruitlessly!

Win the wealth she desired, when he had been beaten in the struggle for it over and over again? asked Jenny of herself. What better chance would he have of winning wealth when burdened with a wife, than he had had without one?

She had yielded—had half responded—to his impetuous embrace; but, as the above questions passed through her mind, her wavering heart once more hardened itself against him, and, lifting her head from his breast, she resolutely freed herself from his clasp.

"Clem," she said—and her soft voice sounded almost harsh in its cold determination, "'tisn't eny use tryin' to say I doan't love 'ee, 'cos I do—better now, p'r'aps, than ever I ha' done before. But I ha' made up my mind to send 'ee from me, an' you ha'

good cause to be gratefu' for it—good cause to be gratefu' that you 'ull find no wife i' me!"

"Hush, Jenny! Why will you say what you know isn't true?"

"*Tis* true. For I'm not warthy o' you, Clem—not warthy o' such love as yours, I knaw that, waal ernough. You 'ull never win such walth, too, as 'ud make me content to be your wife, an' love 'ud count as nothing to me, if 'twas coupled wi' pov'ty."

"Ah, don't say that—don't, don't!"

"Now, do'ee keep quiet—I ha'n't got much more to say, 'cept 'tis best us should part. There's—there's many a maid as—as 'ud make 'ee a better mate 'an me, an'—an' I dessay 'ee 'ull soon meet her. But 'tis time you went on your ways. T' parson 'ull be weary o' waitin', an' t' weddin'-folks are gettin' ready to come up. Good-bye to 'ee, Clem. 'T grieves me to see 'ee take t' loss o' me, so sorely, but I—I'm not warthy o' 'ee. 'Sides, I ha' vowed to wed t' miller; an' come what may o' it, I'll keep my ward!"

As she ceased speaking, Clem, with an angry expression of contempt, strode away, as if to leave her. But, stopping ere he had gone a dozen paces, he hastily returned, and clasping her to his breast once more, pressed fierce, despairing kisses on her lips, her throat, her eyelids—bestowing on her every endearing and tender epithet in his vocabulary.

CHAPTER XXI.

RE-UNITED.

BUT now, the wedding-guests, who had been animatedly disputing amongst themselves as to what they had better do in the emergency that had arisen, seemed to have settled upon some concerted plan of action; for, headed by Mr. Caerden, they came hurrying on to the bridge—the bridegroom finding his lameness very convenient, for once in a way, since it afforded him a plausible pretext for falling behind, so as to be at a safe distance beyond his injured rival's reach.

"Now, then, Clem Freer," cried Mr. Caerden, advancing in front of the others, "just you let go thaat maid o' moine, or us 'ull flung you in t' river. Doan't 'ee hear?—let go o' she, t' wance!"

"Spare me a few moments more, Mr. Caerden," pleaded Clem. "Let me have but two or three moments more, and then, if Jenny——"

"No, not wan," interrupted Mr. Caerden, laying a rough hand on his daughter's shoulder. You ha' had too meny moaments, as 'tis. Let go t' maid, I say."

"Stand back!" commanded Clem, in fast-rising wrath—holding Jenny close, with one arm, and keeping her father off with the other.

"Oh, stan' baak, is it, my maan!" shouted Mr. Caerden, aiming a blow—a blow that missed its mark, however—at Clem's head; while Clem, himself, clutching his assailant by the neckcloth, gave him one vigorous shake and flung him headlong into the midst of his astonished *confrères*.

He soon recovered himself, but the assault was the signal for a general rush forward—Clem, who still held Jenny fast, wildly waving the throng back, and retreating, step by step, to the side of the bridge.

"Keep off," he cried. "For God's sake, keep off, a bit longer, or I won't answer for what I'll do!"

"Never moind whaat *he* ses, frien's—cooam on," cried Mr. Caerden, again rushing forward to the rescue. "There's plenty o' we—bear a han' to get t' maid away from un. Cooam on!"

And it was only too clear to Clem that they would "get t' maid away from" him—that he must presently yield to the superiority of numbers. Maddened, too, by the conviction that, even were he given the opportunity he asked, all his persuasions would fail to win back his faithless love—doubly maddened by the certainly that yielding her up, meant yielding her to the hateful embraces of the miller—he folded her slim form yet more closely to his breast, and, with a sudden bound, stood on the top of the low parapet towards which he had been backing.

"Take my Jenny—my promised wife, from me?" he cried, kissing the fair face of the fainting girl. "Take her from me, would ye? Then," lifting a hand to the stormy skies, "may the Lord God of Heaven have mercy on us, both; for ye shall never, never do it!"

And before the transfixed and horrified spectators could utter a sound or stretch forth a saving hand, he had leapt, with his too well-loved burden, into the fast-flowing current, below.

Women shrieked and clung to each other, as the hapless pair disappeared from their gaze ; while the men, thinking to effect a rescue, dashed down to the river-side.

But in vain. The ruthless waters, swollen by the recent rain, and running at their fleetest, had already swept their unresisting victims beyond—far beyond—all human aid.

And suddenly, the gusty breeze of the earlier morning rose to an angry gale, while the rain, though it had half-promised to hold off for the day, came down in a perfect deluge, sending the frightened women flying, hither and thither, for shelter. Even the men, who were tramping up and down beside the stream, in search of the lost ones, were constrained to suspend their efforts, so wildly tempestuous did the weather become ; and it was not until the grey dusk of evening was stealing over the land, that they were able to resume their quest.

By that time, however, the wind had dropped and the rain had ceased, while the waters of the little river were rippling along as placidly as if they had never known tumult or rage since their creation.

But the tardy quietude of the scene afforded little consolation to the sorrowing few who were again searching along the water's edge. In anxious and almost unbroken silence they had wandered some two miles down the stream. They had carefully examined every clump of rush and sedge, had peered into every little creek and cove formed by the broken and winding banks, but without result ; and they were just about to abandon their sad task for the night when they came upon those they sought.

It was the prettiest spot on the pretty river—a spot that was softly lighted by the rays of the rising moon ; and here, caught by the submerged branches of a half-uprooted willow that bowed and bent with every breath of wind, slept Jenny Caerden and Clem Freer.

They were sleeping the "sleep that knows no waking," Jenny's dark tresses, bereft of bonnet and freed from pins, mingling thickly with the gold of Clem's fairer hair. Very beautiful the re-united lovers looked too, as, with peaceful faces and circling arms, they lay locked together in a close embrace.

Farmer Lane did not return to Treverdale for some days after

that which was to have witnessed Jenny Caerden's wedding, but the story he told of his interview with Clem Freer up in London put a new complexion on the poor young fellow's conduct ; and the good folks of the village quickly veered round to the opinion that he, and not Jenny, deserved the larger share of their sympathy and regret.

The sad event which had brought her wayward friend's intended wedding to so summary an end, proved a terrible shock to Mary Seaton, and her own marriage, which was to have taken place at midsummer, was put off till the ensuing autumn, her grief for the beautiful but wrong-headed girl, being very deep and sincere.

When, however, her wedding day did arrive, neither cloud nor rain marred her calm content ; and as Will Ashdown led her—a happy, smiling bride—out of St. Margaret's Church, the soft sunshine of the early September day was flooding the quaint old High Street of Treverdale with the cheeriest of golden light.

Yet there had been tears in gentle Mary's eyes on the previous evening ; for, on unfolding a carefully-kept letter—a letter she had once undertaken to answer—they had rested on a couple of love tokens, a little gold locket that held a ring of bright hair, and a long, silky tress of dusky hue, that was bound about with a bit of faded red ribbon. And Mary had shaken her head mournfully as, through a mist of tears, she gazed at the two poor *souvenirs* lying on her outspread hand.

"Oh, Jenny, Jenny," she had murmured, stroking the dark tress with a gentle forefinger, "how could you have been so faithless ? Poor Clem—poor, handsome Clem ! Ah, 'tis a sad thing, when a woman's false to the man that loves her !"

THE END.

BELGRAVIA.

NOVEMBER, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By MRS. ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DREAMS.

IT was a great pleasure to May, soon after her return, to receive a letter from Frances Conroy. That accomplished young lady, as has been before remarked, was not a constant or frequent correspondent, but she never neglected her friend. When her letters did come, they were immensely long and rambled over a variety of subjects.

The present one, however, was more compact, as she hoped soon to see May, and tell her everything. Mrs. Conroy was feeling much stronger than she did the previous spring, and was growing anxious to be settled at Audeley Chase, which was so charming in the height of summer. They expected to be in London for a short time in about ten days, and would be as usual at Claridge's Hotel. Frances would send her friend a card from Paris, naming the day on which they would be in London. Adding: "I do hope you will come to us as soon as you can. We hope to have some interesting people at the Chase, which will make a nice change for you. From what Mr. Ogilvie tells my father, I fear your life must be dull, though Mr. Carr says you were looking remarkably well. We are quite

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delighted with our new relation, and I have been trying to enlighten him on political subjects. He is terribly narrow. Is it not a charmingly romantic incident his discovery of a mother in our good cousin Falk?"

The same post brought a letter from Madame Falk also—she was very regular in writing once a week to her young favourite. In this she asked if May had yet broached the question of her adopting journalism as a career to Ogilvie, and added that she was going to make an expedition into Switzerland and to the Italian lakes with her son. "He is wonderfully good to me. So thoughtful for my comfort. I am ashamed of being so slow in growing accustomed to him, but I am beginning to feel more motherly, and remember some of your scoldings on the subject."

The fact was that May had totally forgotten Madame Falk's suggestions touching journalism. She did not see Ogilvie so often as she used before she went to Paris, and when they met he did most of the talking—a slight sense of restraint had crept over her when alone with him since their meeting, when she had perceived the strong effort it had cost to suppress some expression of feeling—of—she knew not what; and since, though he was more guarded, there was a curious wistfulness in his eyes, a lingering tenderness in his touch, that, strive as she would against it, the idea returned again and again, and suggested the transmutation of friendship into love.

This greatly disturbed and even distressed her. In her mind, such a change presaged parting. She knew Ogilvie well, and felt how deeply rooted his ambition was. Life without success—patent, visible success, that would range him in the front rank with the leaders of the day—would not be worth living. Nothing would divert him from this, and she could perceive that if he ever committed matrimony it would be with some woman whose fortune and position could further his schemes. And May, to whom his companionship was the source of her highest pleasure, would have far preferred keeping him as a friend to losing him as a lover, for lose him she must if he developed into that character. These reflections came later. She firmly hoped at this time that he would gradually return to his former mood and manner, and the old platonic friendly relations re-establish themselves. Why might they not go on always? What a

charm? What an everlasting freshness they gave to existence! That there was a dangerous side to such a *liaison* never crossed May's mind. She had seen too little of the world to dream that it would exist.

"I have had delightful letters since I saw you," said May one Sunday morning as she strolled with Ogilvie through Kensington Gardens instead of going to church. "One from Frances. They will be in Town next week—on their way to the Chase. She is kind enough to ask me to stay with them there."

"Ah!" returned Ogilvie, watching her as he spoke through his half-closed eyes. "I suppose you want my intercession with Miss Macallan again. I know you enjoy the Chase."

"I do not wish to go there now," said May quietly, with a far-away look.

"Why?" he asked.

"First, it is too soon to ask for leave of absence again; and next, I should much prefer going later, when they are alone. I should feel out of place among all these fine grand people."

"Why, May, you are not 'posing' as a model of humility?"

"Oh, no! I don't! I am not, in the way you mean it; but I have some sense of the fitness of things."

"You have plenty of all kinds of sense."

"Thank you," said May laughing. "I hope my sense may be of some use to myself."

"That is the first selfish sentiment I have ever heard you utter. I daresay this party that Frances Conroy has been organising will be rather a bore—it is too early. The lively people won't leave town. The learned Continental Muftis will come fast enough. I will tell you all about it. I promised to go, Conroy appealed to me (He was in town last week on his way to the Chase). I believe Madame Zavadoskor is one of the invited. Have you heard of or from her?"

"From her?" repeated May opening her eyes with surprise. "You do not suppose Madame Zavadoskor remembers my existence! I am out of her sight. Indeed were I not so insignificant, I should say she did not like me. It seems ridiculous to say so, but I have quick instincts as to those who dislike me."

"And as to those who love you, May?"

"Yes, of course—equally quick."

Ogilvie sighed a short deep sigh.

"Then you are not likely to see the peerless Countess as she passes through—if she comes."

"No, certainly not. I do not want to see her."

"Nor I," said Ogilvie devoutly. "She will dazzle them all at the Chase though, and store up a mountain of unfriendly observations for future use; she hates the English."

"She likes Mr. Carr, and Miss Barton."

"Carr, ah, yes. He was an exception," and Ogilvie laughed, a sneering laugh.

"I am not surprised at her liking Mr. Carr, I like him too immensely, since I saw how good and loving he is to his mother; in some ways he was like a woman."

"The last comparison I should have expected for such a strapping young bushranger as Carr."

"He is going to take Madame Falk to the Italian lakes," continued May. "I suppose he wants her to get quite well and strong before they undertake the voyage to Australia."

"Is he going to take her out there?"

"I think so."

"How will she stand a colony after some thirty years of Paris?"

"I don't know, but she could hardly refuse such a son anything."

"You think him irresistible then?"

"I should if he were my son."

"Cleverly parried, May! Come, come away round by the trees to the Long Water, this part is getting crammed with 'Arrys and 'Arriets. Here is a nice shaded seat."

"Then Miss Barton would be left to solitary blessedness, Carr would never think of importing *her*?"

"I do not know! it would be rather cruel to leave her behind. and your mention of her reminds me that I wanted to tell you of a proposition Madame Falk made to me—you know I assisted her a little when I was in Paris, with her newspaper work—she thought I might slip into her place and probably live with Miss Barton."

Ogilvie looked at her kindly and then with a curling lip uttered the word "preposterous."

"Why 'preposterous'?" asked May gently.

"It is work you are quite unfit for, and deucedly hard work. I repeat, it is preposterous."

"But, Mr. Ogilvie, no one can earn their bread without a good deal of hard work. I must think of some plan. Miss Macallan will not keep me always, even if I should like to stay, and, forgive me for troubling you, I should like you to think of Madame Falk's scheme as *not* preposterous, but possible."

"It is rather cruel of you to torment me in one of the few happy hours I have had for the last six weeks! You cannot dream how much I enjoy these quiet moments with you. There is something wonderfully restful about you, May. I cannot bear the thought of your rushing about gathering materials for articles and letters like those brazen Press-women."

"It is not exactly an ideal career for a girl, but one need not be brazen nor disagreeable."

"And think of the raff of editors you would have to be civil to," said Ogilvie more to himself than to her.

"If *you* go into Parliament, you will have to be quite as civil to raff that are no better," returned May, looking up to him with a smile.

"Do you fancy I want to get into the House of Commons?" he asked with a searching glance into her eyes.

"You sometimes have spoken as if it were not an impossibility."

"Dreams—idle dreams."

"And Miss Macallan seems to anticipate it also, as the next incident in your career which is to lead to the Premiership."

Ogilvie laughed. "The admirable Euphemia is occasionally 'taken prophetic.' Seriously May, I don't think a journalist's life would do for you. Don't you think you might leave your future to me? It occupies much of my thoughts."

"You know that a suggestion of yours would rank before any other in my mind, but can anyone, save yourself, plan out your life? It is hard to be providence to another, and it seems to me that Madame Falk's idea is a good one. I am so untrained I can do but little—and, in some respects, I like the work. If I think of attempting it, I should begin soon—as soon as she returns."

"What, and would you leave the Granby Road paradise, the dear Euphemia—and *me*, May?"

"That would be worst of all," exclaimed May impulsively, "I should feel dreadfully lost without you now, but what must be—must be."

"You are more ready to yield to destiny than I am," returned Ogilvie, then suddenly laying his hand on hers with a close, almost painful pressure—"Do you imagine I shall ever let you go?"

For a moment his real self spoke out through the iron mask he wore, and an extraordinary thrill quivered electrically along her veins, as May recognised the strong hold he had upon her. She grew pale and cold, but her fear of losing the shadowy barrier which their avowed friendship had erected between them and she knew not what lent her strength to murmur :

"We cannot fight with fate."

There was a brief pause.

Then Ogilvie said in his usual tone :

"How long do you intend to wear black, May?"

"Oh, for some time longer ; you know, it is not yet a year since ——" she stopped.

"Since your poor father, on his death-bed, confided you to my care."

May bowed her head.

"Well, I think I have fulfilled the duty I undertook?"

"Oh, amply," returned May, tears glittering in her soft, sweet, eyes.

"Then trust me a little longer. By the time Madame Falk has returned from her Italian tour, I shall be able to offer you an alternative to journalism—meantime if you mention the subject to Madame Falk, say that I do not like it, but in deference to her I am considering the question."

"Very well," returned May, "I shall do so. And pray, Mr. Ogilvie, remember, I will never consent to live on charity."

"Very well, May, I must also remember something much more formidable—that I am engaged to an infernal luncheon at Lady Carthew's, and must take you back to your cage, you sweet bird! By the way, I hope you are not neglecting your singing? Next time I come you must sing to me."

"No, I practise every day. Do not mind coming all the way back with me, Mr. Ogilvie ; we can part outside the gardens——"

"Do you think I am going to lose a moment I can help?"

May did not answer.

"I cannot say when I shall inflict myself on you again, but I

will write and let you know. I am trying to carry out a rather complicated scheme. It takes time, and—but if successful—well, then I shall tell you all about it. I fear it will be some little time before I can see you again ; however, should you want me you know where to find me.”

“Thank you,” replied May, and they walked on for some minutes in silence. Then Ogilvie began to speak of some books which had struck him lately, and promised to send one or two to her, and the topic lasted till they reached Miss Macallan’s house.

“It must be good-bye now,” he said, “and, May—something has disturbed or distressed you ! Your eyes tell a great deal, there is a look of pain in them.”

“They are false eyes then !” she exclaimed. “There is nothing to annoy. I may be anxious you should come round to Madame Falk’s views, that is all.”

“Ah ! false lips. There is more than that in your heart. Do you know you have never once asked me to come and see you sooner than I propose, never hinted that I stayed away too long ? Do you not care whether I come or not ?”

“I should consider I was taking a liberty, if I asked you to do differently from what suits yourself,” returned May, steadying her voice with some difficulty. “It is good of you to take the trouble of coming, but if you never return I have no right to complain—only—I hope you will not stay away.” There was a slight tremor in her tones.

“I could not if I would,” returned Ogilvie, almost in a whisper. Then the door was opened, and with a lingering hand-shake he left her.

The rest of the day passed like a dream. Ogilvie’s words, and beyond them his voice, his looks, haunted May. This was no friendship—could it be possible that sympathy and compassion together had woke love for her in the heart he masked so carefully from the world ? She was more than half frightened at the idea. She would almost rather go back to the sweet, calm friendliness of their earlier intimacy. The strange faintness that stole over her spirit at the idea of such a result sent an almost painful thrill through every vein—a curious chill that made her tremble, as if death had touched her with its icy finger. Nor in the glimpse of so extraordinary a metamorphosis did any

joyous element mingle. With a strong effort she roused herself, and ashamed of the overpowering hold which Ogilvie had gained upon her, she determined to fight against it with all the force of her will.

* * * * *

Frances Conroy's promised card reached May somewhat sooner than she expected.

"We shall arrive to-morrow night," it said. "Do come and spend the following day with us. I have quantities of things to do, and you can be a great help. My mother's love."

May was genuinely glad to meet her friends once more ; she had managed by being very busy in various directions to keep her mind from dwelling too exclusively on Ogilvie, and she had returned to something of her ordinary steadiness of mind. Now this interview with Frances would be a delightful diversion to her thoughts. She therefore started soon after breakfast for her rendezvous in good spirits, anticipating a pleasant day.

It was gratifying to be warmly welcomed by Mrs. Conroy, who had already breakfasted, and was writing in a room littered with books, newspapers, travelling-bags, writing-cases, and all the impedimenta which travellers, pausing for a brief rest on their way, manage to scatter about, also bowls and vases of exquisite flowers.

"Well, dear child," said Mrs. Conroy, when the first greetings had been exchanged, "tell me all about yourself. Frances is late, she was very tired last night, and I am glad to have a word with you before she comes, for, of course, she will absorb you. How have you found life with your rather formidable-looking employer?"

Whereupon May gave the pleasantest picture she could of her existence in Granby Road, and then warmly congratulated Mrs. Conroy on her improved appearance.

"Yes," she returned, "I feel better than I have done for years. I even venture to hope I may pass next winter in England. I feel absolutely vigorous, and intend walking a good deal in the country. If it were only for the pleasure this gives Mr. Conroy I should rejoice. He, too, is looking very well. He brought up all these flowers from the dear Chase with him yesterday."

Here the entrance of Frances interrupted the conversation.

She looked younger and more doll-like than ever. But an extremely elegant little doll, dressed in the most perfect of travelling costumes, her fluffy golden hair most becomingly arranged, and, to May's mind, better than all, a real sparkle of pleasure in her light blue eyes at the sight of her favourite companion.

"How nice of you to come so early," she cried, kissing her with unusual warmth. "What a nice long day we shall have, our shopping will be quite interesting. No clothes, thank goodness! Books, music, drawing things, some prints, I have quite a long list; I hope you will come to the Chase, dear May. Fancy! I have persuaded dear old Professor Holzkopf to come to us. He has never, I believe, even seen the sea! He is the greatest authority on anthropology in Germany, and we hope to have an exhaustive examination of those mounds on the north of the Chase. I am certain they are ancient British tumuli. Then Dr. Cloudesley, the professor of psychological Buddhism, has promised to come, and Sir John Earle, Colonel Haywood, Mrs. Merrick, Madame Zavadoskoï, Count Blowmintoff, and some others. It will be all very amusing, and not mere waste of time either; you must really come, May."

But May firmly declined, and after a little argument, it was agreed that her visit should be made later.

"Then we hope dear Madame Falk and her son will come to us. My dear May, *what* an extraordinary story that is," exclaimed Mrs. Conroy.

"It is perfectly enchanting," said Frances, "and do you know Mr. Carr is so immensely improved—he responded so intelligently to all my efforts to open his mind to the Liberal side of politics. Of course I repressed as much as possible his tendency to be too affectionate a cousin," concluded Frances in a high-principled tone.

"He is really a good fellow," added Mrs. Conroy. "I am so delighted that Madame Falk has such a prospect of happiness. Mr. Conroy always had a great liking for Bernard Carr; of course, he keeps the name he adopted when old Mr. Carr left him his property, Madame Falk approves too. They were to start yesterday for Switzerland."

"I hope we shall persuade him to give up the idea of returning

to Australia," added Frances, as if she had charged herself with the disposal of his life. "Now, May, we had better be going."

A long and rather fatiguing day followed, as they hunted from shop to shop, and spent an amount of money that frightened May.

"You will dine with us, of course," said Frances. "My father would like to see you, and we shall be alone."

"I shall be delighted," said May, who had made a provisional arrangement with Miss Macallan.

"Mr. Ogilvie dined with us yesterday," said Frances. "He and my father seem to have become quite allies. I must say I think he is improved. He deigns to hear what one has to say, and seemed rather struck with some of my racial theories. We are going with him to the opera to-morrow night, so I am glad you can stay to dinner to-day. My mother is in such a hurry to get home, I fear we must leave on Saturday. By-the-by, my father met Lord Shelburne at dinner a few days ago and he was speaking of Mr. Ogilvie. He seems to have a very high opinion of him. I forget exactly what he said, but it was to the effect that he had the gifts or capacity of a statesman, and that he was rather thrown away in the position he had held."

"No doubt," said May, who was not inclined to be fluent on the subject.

"Have you seen him?" was the next question.

"No, not very lately."

"But I suppose you see him sometimes at Miss Macallan's," persisted Frances.

"Oh! yes—he used to come oftener—in the winter."

"Ah! of course, there is so much going on now. Well, May, dear, I am so glad we were the means of introducing you to so useful a friend. I was speaking of you to him last night, and, I assure you, I told him I considered his goodness to you a personal obligation to myself."

"Thank you, Frances!" returned May, with a curious feeling of humiliation dashed with annoyance.

How little Frances could imagine the terms she was on with the probably future statesman. May never thought she could feel so ill at ease with her young friend and patroness. But in spite of this cat's-paw of discomfort the dinner was very agreeable. May had never seen Mr. Conroy so

bright and cordial, nor his wife so serenely content. Frances, too, was unusually human, she seemed to lose sight, for once, of her counsels of perfection. Finally Mr. Conroy ordered a cab, and dispatched his valet on the box to see their "favoured guest" safely home.

"And who is the gentleman that came back with you?" asked Miss Macallan, who, to use her own expression, had been "speering" through the venetian blinds.

"The gentleman?—oh, that was Mr Conroy's valet. Mr. Conroy insisted on sending him, though I told him I was accustomed to take care of myself, and would have to do so always."

"Hum!" murmured Euphemia, in a dissentient tone, while she thought: "Those Conroys know something too! I'll go bail there's a good fortune coming to her from somewhere." Aloud: "I must say you are a lucky girlie for finding friends. Now, there's no use sitting up burning gas, we'll just go to our beds,"—a proposition readily accepted by May.

For three or four longer days she neither saw nor heard from Ogilvie. She had never before been so long without some communication from him since she had been under Miss Macallan's roof, and she grew nervously anxious for some tidings.

At length, one evening late—it was more than nine o'clock—she had been busy over some needlework in her own room, when Jessie tapped at her door.

"Mr. Ogilvie is waiting you in the drawing-room," said that grim functionary.

"Indeed! I will come directly," cried May, resisting a desperate longing to stay and put her hair in better order, her dress in trimmer array, and ashamed of the wild beating of her heart, it was an effort of courage to go down and face her guardian.

Ogilvie seemed to be walking up and down the room.

"I have been greatly pressed for time," he began, without further greeting, as he took her hand and drew her near the gasalier, in which Jessie had only lit two burners, while he seemed to study her face with eager eyes. "To-night I had some business with Miss Macallan, and have just time to say a word to you—a temporary good-bye, May. I go to Audeley Chase to-morrow, on my return I shall have much to tell you of my

future plans, of which I think you will agree with me are the best I can devise. I shall be absent—not long, and unless there is a necessity we need not write.”

“Then give my love to——”

“No—I will give no messages. You are well, May—you are content?—there is something sad about your lips, my dear—ward! Have you anything to tell me before I go?”

“Nothing whatever,” said May, startled by the suppressed vehemence of his manner into forgetfulness of her own nervousness. “Is there anything disturbing you? You do not seem quite like yourself.”

“Do I not?” he exclaimed, with a slight start, and releasing her hand. “Then I am a weaker fool than I thought.” He walked towards the door and back. “Tell me, my sweet ward,” and he drew near, “would you sacrifice something to help me through—a difficulty?”

“Can you doubt it?” she exclaimed with a bright glance and smile. “If I could ever help you——” She stopped, with a slight break in her voice.

“I am sure I could count on you, May,”—he was rapidly recovering his usual tone and manner. “I will put you to the test, though the proof will be but slight. Good-night, good-bye!” Again he took her hand, and drew her towards him, then kissing it twice—the first approach to a caress he had ever attempted—repeated “Good-night,” turned, and left the room abruptly.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“NEWS FROM THE CHASE.”

THE “Grand Prix” had been run, and the flower month of June fully established, when a few lines from Ogilvie reached May, somewhat to her surprise. Usually he adhered closely to whatever programme he laid down—whether to write or not to write.

He asked her to send a report of herself to his London address, as he might run up to Town for twenty-four hours, but would not have time to go so far as Granby Road. “I want to know how you are, and what you are doing,” he continued. “Did you happen to see Madame Zavadoskoï as she passed through Town? She is in great force and charming everyone.

The party is somewhat incongruous. I shall have much to tell you about it when we meet. I am staying longer than I expected—which I will explain. Be sure to write."

This was waiting her at breakfast one lovely morning when the bright sunshine and balmy air made May long for a ramble in "leafy ways" and in pleasant company. The sight of Miss Macallan's grim, wintry face and steel-spring curls seemed terribly incongruous on such a morning, and yet there was a look of grim satisfaction on her cast-iron visage. She, too, had a letter from Ogilvie, which she perused slowly; and as she turned the page something fell out of it on the carpet. May finished reading her epistle considerably before Euphemia got to the end of hers. As soon as she had, she took up the envelope and peered into it eagerly.

"Where," she began, "where——"

"Something dropped when you were reading your letter," said May, stooping to pick it up.

In fluttering to the floor the folded slip of paper had opened, and she could not help seeing it was a cheque for twenty pounds, signed by Ogilvie.

"Oh, don't trouble! Thank you!" exclaimed Miss Macallan, almost snatching it from her, and thrusting it and the letter into their envelope, and that into her pocket.

She looked a little confused, too—somewhat to May's surprise—as her composure was generally of the most immovable description; but she diverted her young companion's thoughts by asking: "Have you a letter from Mr. Ogilvie?"

"Yes. He thinks of prolonging his stay at the Chase. They seem to have a pleasant party, chiefly foreigners."

"Eh! But they must throw away an awful heap of money and on a lot of hungry foreigners."

"A great many foreigners are very rich," returned May, with a smile. "I imagine English people have very little idea of the luxury and elegance of wealthy French families. I have not seen anything of it myself, for none of my friends were rich; but I have heard of it."

"They are a set of feckless, extravagant loons, I daresay."

"No, indeed, Miss Macallan. There are not more provident people than the French in the world."

"Oh, ay! They have no fault in your eyes."

"Indeed, I am not so prejudiced."

"A' well, I cannot stay hawering, I must go, as I have to go to the bank. I may as well draw you your quarter's salary."

"But it is not due yet, not for more than a fortnight," exclaimed May, quite startled by this unexpected readiness.

"No matter. I daresay you won't object to take it. And it will be off my mind. If you must know, May, your guardian insisted on your salary beginning from the day you accepted my offer, so by his reckoning it *is* due. My word, but Piers Ogilvie knows how to make a bargain for himself or any one he takes up. Mind you write out a receipt for me, and put a penny stamp on it."

"Certainly, Miss Macallan; and I shall date it on the day I really consider it due."

"You are an honest lassie, but maybe Mr. Ogilvie will be not well pleased."

"Why need he know?" asked May, opening her eyes.

"Ay! You are right, you are right," and with a relaxed brow Miss Macallan left the room to hold high council with Jessie before going out.

May, cheered by this proof that she was not forgotten, went to her room to pen a long reply to Madame Falk, who had written to her from Chamouni, in a very happy frame of mind, and evidently enjoying the new life which was opening for her. "I may see you in a couple of months," was the concluding paragraph of her letter, "as my dear son is anxious that I should accept Mrs. Conroy's invitation, and now I feel I have the courage to revisit the Chase. If so, will you not return with us, dear May? I shall, at all events, inspect Miss Macallan, and form my own opinion upon her."

"I almost wish I could go back with her," thought May, as she read over this friendly epistle. "But I can decide nothing yet." Then she mused on the uncertainty of her position, the close yet elastic tie which bound her to Ogilvie, the overpowering influence he had gained over her. Yet these reflections did not make her feel uneasy. Ogilvie was too wise, too experienced, too infinitely trustworthy, not to guide her future safely and well, only there was just a tinge of mystery in the occult link which bound them to each other that partly charmed and partly alarmed her.

Fixing her whole attention on her letter, she succeeded in banishing her guardian from her mind at least for some time.

Miss Macallan despised people who needed change of air. It was just a "ploy" for the idle and extravagant, persons of common sense stayed at home and made a little brimstone and treacle or liquorice water do duty for sea water or mountain air. A note from the minister's wife, however, gave her food for reflection on this subject. A relative of hers, a rich Glasgow manufacturer, wished to bring a delicate boy of his to Town, that the child might undergo an operation under the knife of a renowned surgeon. He, therefore, required a roomy, quiet house in a very quiet neighbourhood. Would Miss Macallan be inclined to let hers for a few weeks at a good rent?

To ponder this tempting question in silence and alone, so as to give the prompt reply requested, Miss Macallan despatched May to do the usual morning's shopping and general business, while she jotted figures on the back of Mrs. Minister's note, and went through the balancing of pros and cons, which constitutes "making up one's mind." She had just come to a definite conclusion, and even fixed the lowest price she would take (it was anything but low), when a brougham drove up the door, from which stepped a lady, a remarkably elegant lady, clothed in a costume of grey tweed and a toque of grey straw, the only touch of colour being a deep red wing, a grey gauze veil was drawn to one side, and loosely thrown round her neck.

"Who ever can that be?" asked Macallan of herself.

In a few seconds Jessie came in.

"There's a leddy wants Miss Riddell, mem."

"Well, she's out."

"Sae I told her, mem; then she says, 'Can I speak with Miss Macallan?' says she."

"Show her in then, I haven't many minutes to spare," returned Miss Macallan impatiently.

"Vera well, mem."

The next minute the lady entered, a small, slight figure, extremely graceful and very distinguished.

"You will forgive my intrusion," said a sweet, refined voice, "but I have no other chance of seeing, or hearing of, Miss Riddell, for I go to Paris this evening, and I must bring some account of the young lady to her friends, Madame Falk and

Miss Barton, so pray excuse me, Miss Macallan. I have so often heard them speak of you."

"Take a seat, Madam. I don't know exactly who I am speaking to."

"Countess Zavadoskor," laying her card on the table. "I am an old friend of your nephew, Mr. Ogilvie."

"Oh, indeed, I'm sure I'm pleased to see you. It's with him you'll have likely met May Riddell."

"Exactly," said Madame Zavadoskor, taking a chair.

"Well, she is not in at present, but she will not be long, if you'll not mind waiting a bit?"

"Thank you, I should like to do so. Madame Falk tells me Mr. Ogilvie is wonderfully kind to his adopted ward, and comes to see her often."

"Ay! He does that!" returned Miss Macallan, torn between her desire to go and discuss the house-letting matter with the minister's wife, and her eagerness to avail herself of the delightful opportunity of finding out some particulars concerning May and her supposed fortune from this fascinating person. "Then you see he was a great friend of her father's for years and years, I believe."

"Ah! not for so many years as he has known me. My eldest boy was a mere lad of seventeen when we made Mr. Ogilvie's acquaintance, and now he is a married man."

"Eh! and you have a son married!" cried Miss Macallan, greatly surprised. "I should not have thought it! Well, anyhow, he has been uncommon good, and I may say generous to Miss Riddell. There are few guardians like him."

"Guardian? Did Mr. Riddell appoint him her guardian?"

"Yes—that is, I believe so. She always speaks of him as her guardian; and, though I do not ask questions (I never pry into what does not concern me). I suppose it isn't easy to get at her money just now. That is the reason he placed her with me!"

"Probably. But I understood that, as you required a companion and amanuensis, you naturally took your nephew's *protégée*?"

"Me? Ay—yes, of course, I wanted a companion, and she is a douce, pleasant, well-behaved girlie!"

"A very interesting young person indeed. But, are you under the impression that she has money—or an inheritance?"

"Well, yes ; you see it's all very well to be kind and generous, but people don't throw away money without some hope of return."

"Certainly not," said Madame Zavadoskoï, with an infantile laugh, "unless they are imbeciles, and our dear Ogilvie is not one of that class. But *is* Mr. Ogilvie lavish of his money on his sweet ward?"

"I'll no say *that*, but he is very anxious she should be comfortable and at home with me, and so she is. By-and-bye, if all turns out as we wish, they will not forget that I was friendly and helpful."

"It would be a shame if they did," cried Madame Zavadoskoï. "I suppose then, while they are waiting for this fortune to come in, Mr. Ogilvie is at the cost of his ward's maintenance? In fact, he said as much to me! We are very confidential, you see."

"Ah, well, he is at liberty to say what he likes, but I cannot say *I* am ; anyhow, I trust he will be rewarded for his goodness to the fatherless——"

"I have no doubt he will be," returned Madame Zavadoskoï, with a peculiar gleam in her eyes. "Stupid old thing! She is exceedingly tough," she said to herself, "I ought to have got at everything by this time." "I am sure," Miss Macallan," she added aloud, "it is exceedingly good of you to give a home to your nephew's *protégée*! *Both* ought to be deeply indebted to you, for giving Miss Riddell an asylum in her time of trouble."

"Oh! I'm not saying that she isn't an industrious, useful young creature, and I shall never regret taking her as my companion ; she darns napery just right well."

"Still, my dear Miss Macallan, it will be years before you need the assistance of a 'companion' as it is generally understood," said Madame Zavadoskoï laughing.

"That's neither here nor there," returned Miss Macallan, with a stolid expression of face, "and now I hope you'll excuse me if I leave you. I have to go out on business. Miss Riddell must be in in a very few minutes, if you wait. I'm sure she would be sorry to miss you."

"You are very good. I should be very sorry to miss her, besides I have a message from our mutual friend, Miss Conroy, for her. And at all events, I am very glad to have made the acquaintance of my friend Ogilvie's aunt."

"You are no correct; he is just my second cousin once removed."

"Ah, well, at any rate, his kinswoman. Good-morning, Miss Macallan."

"Good-morning madam—I don't feel quite equal to say your name."

"That is a small matter. Think of me as Ogilvie's Russian friend."

"Tenacious, blundering old Scotch terrier," said Madame Zavadoskor aloud in her own tongue, "still she has admitted more than she thinks. Now for my cross-examination of mademoiselle! What an amount of trouble I am giving myself. Why? Ogilvie always worried me! He is almost the only man I could never quite manage, that's the reason I love to circumvent him. He thinks he is sailing straight into port with a favourable wind. Ah!" she rose and walked round the room, picking up and glancing at the title pages of the few books lying about, and peeped into the large, well-thumbed Bible and Book of Paraphrases, both bristling with book-markers and slips of paper, which lay on a small table beside a straight-backed armchair. "What a dungeon of a room! What a grim old mastiff of a woman. If she is a specimen of the females, the men must be an unconquerable race. Does she know what enjoyment means? I suspect Ogilvie is playing a deep game. If that girl does not come in, I will give mine up, and go. I cannot stand this abode, 'Lasciate ogni speranza voi che intrate,' might well be written over the entrance. Ah," interrupting herself as the door opened and May entered. "My dear Miss Riddell, I am so glad I shall not miss seeing you."

"Madame Zavadoskor!" exclaimed May, seized with a sudden vague sense of alarm, at the sight of the brilliant Russian standing in front of the fireplace as if in possession of the premises. "'Hast thou found me, oh! mine enemy,'" was the text which came almost to her lips, for she had always felt that in spite of her insignificance there was a degree of antagonism between her and the Countess. She recovered herself quickly, however, and coming forward to shake hands, she said as she was bound to do:

"How very good of you to come all this way to see me."

"I am very pleased to do so. Of course, my good Bartie will want to hear all about you, besides wishing to see you myself. This does not seem an abode of bliss, my dear Miss Riddell, yet *you* are looking—well—wonderfully developed."

"The responsibility of taking care of Miss Macallan has no doubt matured me," said May smiling.

"Something has," returned Madame Zavadoskor emphatically, as she placed herself in Miss Euphemia's sacred chair. "Tell me, do you read prayers and curse your neighbours all day long?"

"Curse our neighbours?" repeated May puzzled.

"I am told that one part of the Church of England service is cursing your neighbours."

"Oh! that is only once a year, and it is quite as often omitted as read nowadays."

"I have had a long interview with Miss Macallan," resumed the Countess, "she is most formidable. How determined you must be to stand constant friction with such a woman! I begin to respect you enormously."

"Miss Macallan is by no means hard or unkind to me. I should rather not live with her always, but, you see, I do not seem crushed."

"No, I see you are not. What enormous influence your *guardian* must have over her. She tells me Mr. Ogilvie is your guardian. Did your father appoint him?"

May shook her head.

"My poor father appointed nothing. On his death-bed he asked Mr. Ogilvie to take care of me."

"And he has done so?"

"Most kindly, most judiciously. His securing this engagement for me was the best help he could give me. I am able to make my living without being a burden to anyone."

"But, great heavens! you are not going to be content with a life like this? Why, it is not human—at your age, too!"

"Oh, I am not without hopes or ambitions."

"Of course not. Will you not tell me; possibly I might help you?"

"Thank you, madame; you are very good. I have no objection to tell my hopes—or rather, my wishes. The very first is to live with dear Madame Falk and Miss Barton. But we shall

all lose Madame Falk as she will go away with her son, I suppose."

"I am not so sure. Isn't *that* a romance? English life and the lives that mingle with it has material enough to supply romances to the whole world. But, to return. What is the other scheme?"

"Oh, when Frances marries, which, of course she will, I should like to be Mrs. Conroy's companion, if she requires one. She is so charming."

Madame Zavadoskoï gazed at her as she spoke, with an expression of intense surprise.

"Is she showing her hand voluntarily?" thought the shrewd little Russian.

"Well," she exclaimed, "you may have an opportunity sooner than you expect. I suppose Mr. Ogilvie has written you an account of our party at the Chase? It was such a curious 'Olla Podrida.'"

"No; Mr. Ogilvie rarely writes to me, unless there is a necessity."

"Ah, indeed! Men are such bad correspondents. Well, it was very amusing, but it soon grew a bore. Frances Conroy is so bent upon improving herself and everyone else, that the looking-upward attitude became a little wearisome."

"She has always been very conscientious and studious."

Madame Zavadoskoï made an expressive little grimace.

"Yes, she is a very serious young woman. I wonder how she will get on with Ogilvie."

"How do you mean?" asked May, as she stooped to pick her sunshade, which she had dropped when shaking hands with her visitor. But she knew—it came to her with a flash—and it was to announce the coming event that Madame Zavadoskoï called upon her. The stress of the moment seemed to brace her up against the cross-examination she felt sure would follow.

"What!" cried the Countess, "do you mean to say that your guardian has not informed you of his engagement?"

"No. But I am not so surprised at that as at Frances. She would, I thought, have written to tell me at once."

"I don't think he has spoken to her *yet*. But it is all arranged with the father and mother (foreign fashion). It was very important to keep right with them, for they had the money in

their power, and might have looked for rank ; but the father is quite devoted to Ogilvie. Being sure of the parents he can press on with the love-making."

"But," said May in a wondering tone, "I never thought Frances quite *liked* Mr. Ogilvie. Of course he would naturally be attracted by her fortune ; but I do hope he will make her happy, and—love her. She has been so accustomed to love," and May sighed.

Madame Zavadoskoï listened and watched with senses keenly alive to every tone and change of expression, but she could detect no veiled emotion, not the faintest faltering. Had she then been mistaken ? Had Ogilvie taken all this trouble from purely disinterested motives ? All the experience of her life forbade such credulity. And this girl, for whom Ogilvie had developed a new facet of character, was *she* so childish as to suspect nothing more than platonic benevolence underlying the tender consideration he had shown her ?

Strange, exceptional creatures as the English were, this was *too* extra-human a state of things for belief.

"Oh, of course he will be kind and well-bred, and all he ought to be. He will win a good position, and give her all the rights she ought to have as the contributor of capital in the partnership. Her own high opinion of herself will be an immense help to him. As to Ogilvie himself, you may trust him to provide his own compensations. "You know," correcting her tone, "power, ambition, success outweigh everything with him."

"Perhaps so ; yet I must always remember that he could spare time to help a very insignificant item of the society he moved in."

Madame Zavadoskoï was silent for a moment—the quiet frankness of May's voice and manner baffled her. But it was impossible she could be indifferent *if* Ogilvie willed otherwise. It seemed equally impossible that Ogilvie should trouble himself about what brought him no return, in which view she perhaps wronged him somewhat. For he was not ungenerous, nor quite adamant towards his fellow-creatures. Her next query was directed to ascertaining the footing they had been on for the last seven or eight months, of which Madame Zavadoskoï knew nothing.

"Of course, being in the service of his relative, you have seen a good deal of Mr. Ogilvie."

"Oh, yes. He comes here occasionally when there is not much going on."

"This Miss Macallan has money, no doubt. It is a large house, only in an unknown country one does not know what that represents. Probably Ogilvie will be her heir."

"It is not unlikely," said May, "she thinks highly of him. In fact, adores him after her own stony fashion."

"Of course, in the season his time is much occupied."

"I suppose so," said May.

"Well," said Madame Zavadoskoï, rising, "I am very pleased to have seen you and have such good account to give of you. You need not say anything of my trusting you with the secret soon to be revealed, of Mr. Ogilvie's approaching engagement."

"Of course I will not if you forbid."

"I start for Paris this evening, *en route* for Denmark. New ground for me; but the Count fancies a visit there, and I am going to do the conjugal as an example to my son."

They exchanged adieux, and May accompanied her visitor to the door, where a respectable-looking brougham from the hotel awaited her.

"Oh, by the way," said Madame Zavadoskoï, pausing on the doorstep, "please do not say I came here. I was going to cross last night, and said so. If I changed my plans it will be attributed to some deep political scheme. I know the English view of Russian character."

"Very well," returned May. "But if you have not sworn Miss Macallan to secrecy my silence will not avail."

"I must take my chance then," said the Countess, with a Parisian shrug. "Adieu. Au revoir." She stepped into her carriage and drove away.

At last—at last May was alone, and free to think her own thoughts, to realise to the full the stunning blow she had received.

How could she believe that Frances was to marry Ogilvie! She was the last woman she could have dreamt of as his choice—neither had seemed to care much for the other, and now, all the charm of her sweet, sympathetic friendship with her guardian was over—the light and warmth seemed to die out of her life. How was she to endure existence? A dense, black mist seemed suddenly to wrap a shroud over the future, and instead of the

fair phantom of happiness and perfect trust—which only an hour ago beckoned her lovingly—there yawned an open grave into which she must cast all her precious things. Could it be true?—yes. Something told her that Madame Zavadoskoř was well-informed.

Why—why did she take the trouble of coming all that way to announce Ogilvie's engagement? and a voice within her answered, "To make a quarrel between you and your guardian."

"Which she shall not," resolved May, "and it was only a few hours ago that I dreamed of being always more or less his companion—of importance to him!—he spoke as if it was a trial to part with me—and it *was*! for the time. There was truth in his voice. What shall I do?—How shall I endure life?—but I must. I must not show any pitiable weakness. He has never deceived me—he has never pretended to be more than a kind, considerate friend. I am the one to blame, for misconstruing his kindness, his interest. I must bear it and show no sign!—yet, he was inclined to love me—he was! If I die in the effort, I will shield myself from contemptuous pity. That woman's coming was an infinite good, for I am forewarned—and, therefore, forearmed."

CHAPTER XXV.

"GOOD-BYE—GOOD-BYE."

"PLEASE m'm, Miss Riddell says would you excuse her coming to tea—she has a bad headache," said Agatha, as she brought in the teapot, a jug of boiling water, and a couple of eggs.

"Eh! my word! it will be the height of ill-luck if she sickens for anything just now, and there is a good deal of sickness about. Go, Agatha, ask her if she will have a cup of tea in her room; say I'm coming up to see her as soon as I have had mine," and Miss Macallan began to stir her tea meditatively. "It's a good offer—a very good offer," she said to herself, "and worth turning out for—the two servants taken off my hands and Jessie will look after things. Aye! should this girlie turn sick, it would be a cruel pity to lose such a chance."

"Miss Riddell's much obliged, 'm, but she couldn't take nothing now, 'm," said Agatha, returning.

"That's bad! Did you notice how her eyes looked."

"Well, no, 'm—she has her blinds down."

"I'll come up and see her presently."

And Agatha left the room. The gentle Euphemia continued her meditations. It had been a very satisfactory year altogether, and this unexpected offer for her house was a crowning *bonne-bouche*; on the whole May had been a profitable inmate, her board cost but little, and she had been more useful than Miss Macallan expected; all this would be neutralised if "that girl" took ill.

The result of these cogitations was that May was disturbed in her earnest effort to accustom her mind to the sudden and complete change wrought by Madame Zavadosko's news in the aspect of life, to steady her nerves, and to think what would be her best course for the future? A heavy thump on her door brought her back to the bitter present.

"Come in," she cried, somewhat impatiently, thinking it was one of the servants.

To her surprise and annoyance, Miss Macallan stalked in, carrying a large bluish bottle and a teaspoon. May, who had thrown herself on the bed that she might hide her eyes from the light on the pillow, started up.

"You're looking awfu' bad," said Miss Macallan severely. "You're just ghastly white, and that black under the eyes! Your head aches, eh?"

"Yes—it is very painful!"

"And your back and limbs?"

"Thank you. I am not conscious of them."

"I am glad of that; now let me feel your pulse—um! it's terrible quick! Where did ye go yesterday?"

"Yesterday? Oh! I went into Kensington Gardens in the afternoon with Mrs. McKilligan's children and the nurse."

"Well, that ought not to have done you any harm."

"Oh, no, it did me good."

"Well, my dearie, I am a bit uneasy about you. There's fever and a sort of cholera going about, and I am frightened lest you should catch it."

"You need not alarm yourself; I do not feel at all unwell; I have a headache, that is all."

"I never knew you have a headache before."

"I have really excellent health."

"Ay! You're just one of the people that when they *do* take anything have it bad! Here, I have brought you some citrate of magnesia; it's stuff my poor brother thought a great deal of, for we never let a doctor inside our doors, but just managed ourselves. It's cooling and pleasant to take—you've a water-bottle and glass here?"

"You are very good, Miss Macallan, to take so much trouble about me," said May, really grateful for her attention.

But Miss Macallan was too busy measuring out her citrate of magnesia to listen.

"There," she exclaimed, stirring it up vigorously, "drink that up, at once," handing it to May, who took the dose obediently. "Now you lie down a bit, and don't attempt any solid food till to-morrow; I'll make you some oatmeal gruel myself—it's light and nourishing."

"You are very good—I shall be quite well to-morrow."

"I hope so"—emphatically—"but, you see, I'm thinking of letting my house for a bit, in fact I have a good offer for it, and it would be wæfu' to have you taken ill, besides that, Mr. Ogilvie would be vexed."

"Oh," said May, feeling that Miss Macallan's milk of human kindness was accounted for.

"And talking of letting the house," continued Euphemia, sitting down on an ottoman at the foot of the bed. "I'd like to know what you would think of doing in case I go to—oh, somewhere by the sea. It might be more convenient if you were to visit some of your friends, for I'm not going to take Jessie nor Agatha with me."

"Yes," cried May, catching at the idea. "It might be much more convenient for you to go alone. There need be no difficulty about that."

"In any case, we can decide on nothing until you hear what your guardian says. I wish he were not away—couldn't you drop him a line?"

"I think I may hear from him to-morrow, and he will say probably when he may come up," returned May, shivering with a keen thrill of pain at the idea of writing or speaking to Ogilvie.

"Well, if he does not then I'll be glad if you will let him know my plans. He is aye a masterful man, and doesn't like to be crossed, but he could not expect me to give up a chance like this."

"No, of course, he could not," returned May, longing to get rid of her, and go on with the struggle against her own weak despair, which she was so determined to conquer.

"You are looking better already," said Miss Macallan, gazing at her with critical eyes. "Don't you think it would do you more good to come and help me look through the napery, and choose what I'll leave out for the family that's coming in, than to be lying here thinking of your ailments."

"No, Miss Macallan," returned May, smiling, amused in spite of herself at the selfishness so candidly displayed. "I believe the best cure for headache is rest and silence."

"Eh! I'm sure I'm no that given to words," said Miss Macallan rising, and a little huffed. "I'll leave you now, and you'll come down when you are equal to it," and she left the room, closing the door with a bang.

May returned to her self-examination and condemnation. How she despised herself for misinterpreting Ogilvie's friendly kindness, and threw dust upon her head metaphorically; no humiliation could be greater than her folly deserved, her contemptible vanity had blinded her into believing that a man like Ogilvie would give his real warm affection to her. Pity for her loneliness, her destitution, had given his words and manner that exquisite veiled tenderness which had drawn her heart to him irresistibly, and she had, even of late, fancied it might be love—fool, poor, weak, self-deluded fool! But even as she raged against her own illusions the memory of certain words and looks, the lingering touch of his hand, the electric currents of reciprocity which flowed between them, came back to her with convincing power, and for a moment or two her heart declared aloud, "I have *not* yielded unsought all the treasure of my affection;" then this salve to the cruel bruises of her self-respect would be torn away by the next wave of thought, and so she toiled round the torturing circuit. Gradually from out of this mental chaos some distinct resolutions arose:

First, she would fold the cloak of silence and reserve round her own rejected love, so that, like Cæsar, it should die decently with no display of gaping wounds! Next, she must treat Mr. Ogilvie frankly and gratefully, as the guardian to whom she owed so much; finally, she must show no unbecoming haste to leave Miss Macallan, though burning to fly from her house that

moment. These were the lines on which she must guide her conduct! Would she have the strength to carry them out? and her spirit answered "Yes." She must also keep well, and strong, and she would! For awhile she felt her will could lift her over her difficulties—but this power could not last long.

Miss Macallum's project of letting her house gave May a blessed glimpse of speedier escape than she could otherwise have hoped for. She must be prepared to take advantage of it. This thought lent her energy to rise, and rearrange her hair, which had become loose, and then she penned a short note to Miss Barton, informing her of Miss Macallan's wish to be disembarassed of her (May), and asking if she might come for a little while to her old quarters.

Having accomplished so much, she took her courage in both hands, and went downstairs to place her services in the matter of selecting the "napery" at Miss Macallan's command, during which process she underwent a sharp cross-examination respecting Madame Zavadosko, against whom, for some occult reason, the profound Euphemia seemed to have conceived a strong dislike.

May's anticipation proved prophetic.

Next morning's post brought her a brief note.

"DEAR MAY,

"I hope to be in town to-morrow morning—shall call in the afternoon."

"Yours truly,

"PIERS OGILVIE."

"I shall be able to explain everything to him then," said May, handing the note to Miss Macallan.

"Eh, but that will do fine!—you shall have him all to yourself, and mind you persuade him."

"I will certainly try," returned May, with a degree of energy that surprised her employer.

How the rest of the day passed she could never quite recall. She only remembered going out to buy flowers, and arranging them to the best of her ability—to make the room look pretty for the last time, she felt. That Ogilvie and herself would drift apart seemed to her a certainty. Indeed, she hoped they would. Nevertheless, she made the usual preparations to welcome him.

Three o'clock struck, and May carried the tray containing the remnants of moss and ends of stalks down to the pantry, and was detained for a few minutes by Miss Macallum, who called her into the dining-room to inform her that she had had a message from the minister's wife which would oblige her to go out.

While Miss Macallum was speaking a hansom drove up to the door, and the front door bell was rung quickly and impatiently.

"There, my dearie, there he is," exclaimed Euphemia, "I leave the matter in your hands."

May's heart seemed to stand still for a second and then throbbled violently. She paused to recall her courage, then she ascended the stair, and, opening the door, was in the presence of the man she dreaded, yet loved.

Ogilvie was standing at the table and looking bright and alert, and as if he had thrown off the cares or troubles which had evidently oppressed him when they had last met. He came quickly to meet her, and taking her hand said only her name: "May," looking into her eyes as they stood silent for a second, till May, finding her voice, asked with commendable composure and a welcoming smile:

"How is everyone at the Chase?"

"Everyone seems flourishing, which is more than you look. Are you pining to escape from the hot, dusty streets to purer air and leafy ways?"

"No," said May, taking a corner of the sofa, feeling scarcely able to stand, "but I imagine Miss Macallum is, for she has let her house for five or six weeks."

"Let her house!" repeated Ogilvie, his brows meeting in an angry frown, as he drew a chair opposite May. "How has she done this without consulting me?"

"I believe she got a very good price, and did not like to refuse; she does not wish me to go with her, so I have written to Miss Barton to ask if she can take me in, if not, I daresay my dear little Mademoiselle Perret will."

Ogilvie did not speak at once, then in a tone of cold displeasure he said:

"So you have arranged your plans without any reference to me?"

"I could not help it, Mr. Ogilvie," returned May, gently. "I could not force myself on Miss Macallum, and I was obliged to find some place to go to."

"You should have deferred your answer till you had consulted me," said Ogilvie sternly.

"It was only yesterday that I heard of this new plan. Had your note not come this morning I should have written to you. You do not imagine I am so forgetful of all your goodness as willingly to slight you?"

"No, dear May!" in the deep but soft tones that were so charming to her ear. "You give me more consideration than I deserve, but that infer—that skinflint cousin of mine should not have made plans which, without my concurrence, may possibly upset mine. However, I shall settle matters with her presently," and from his expression May augured that the quarter of an hour awaiting the amiable Euphemia would not be a very agreeable one.

"Pray remember, Mr. Ogilvie, that I should like to go to Miss Barton very much."

"Yes, I will—it might fit in too," he replied meditatively. There was a pause. May waited with intense longing for his next words—would he announce his approaching marriage?

"As far as your own movements are concerned, May," he resumed, "I see no objection to your going to Miss Barton. It will be dull for you, but you are accustomed to a dull life, and endure it with infinite philosophy. I do not know that I ever met a girl quite like you, but I have generally known older women. Now I am going to inflict my own affairs on you, and I have a great deal to say?"

"Not too much for me to hear with interest," said May, softly.

"There is something unusually guarded in your voice," he remarked, with a searching look.

"Only in your imagination, my dear guardian."

"Perhaps so," he paused. "I have decided on an important step since I saw you, May, or rather the last step of several, and, before taking it, I should like to discuss it with you. Our friendship has been so close—so sweet—that you must hear of it first from myself. I am going to marry soon, though I have not yet asked the lady's consent—but I feel sure of it—not from conceit," smiling, "I do not for a moment believe she is in love with me, but, because she is a well-bred gentlewoman, and would never show me certain signs of dignified approval if she intended to reject me."

"And the lady?" asked May, smiling and astonished at her own composure.

"One of the lady's qualifications is her affection for you—you will therefore guess her name to be Frances Conroy."

May felt conscious that Ogilvie was watching her closely, which considerably helped her self-command.

"Frances Conroy," she repeated, "then I am sure you have chosen well. She is clever, and well accustomed to Society—above all she is very true."

"For my purpose—yes, I believe I have—I shall be very confidential with you, my sweet friend, for I believe most profoundly in your loyalty and truth. You cannot perhaps imagine the delight, the relief it is to a man whose whole life, like mine, has been passed 'on guard,' to find one heart—one true sympathetic friend, with whom he can take off the iron mask he is doomed to wear, and be himself—weak, or faulty, or inconsistent. There is no other affection comparable to this. Therefore—May, I can never part with you."

May kept silence—a sense of indignation beginning to burn in her heart—an incredulous smile playing round her lips.

"I seem to be uttering a paradox?" he said, still watching her, and feeling surprised and uneasy at her composure. "Have patience and hear me out. I want to detail my plan. As I said Miss Conroy's regard for you is a very useful factor in it—you must know that life in obscurity is impossible for me. I confess I am ambitious, but I do not think my ambition is ignoble. There are certain lines of foreign policy to carry out which I would devote my life. But to attain the position I aim at, I must have no difficulty on the score of money. For quiet obscurity I have enough: for the career I have marked out I am a pauper. Frances Conroy's money supplies my need. Her father and mother like me, and have given their consent, should their daughter accept me—all this is but the frame of my life—the outer shell which shelters the core wherein lies the main-spring of my mental vitality. Do you follow me, May?"

"I am listening with all my heart and soul," she returned.

The earnestness of her tone satisfied him.

"Well then, this shrine—this Holy of Holies—to keep the lamp burning in it I must have a priestess. That priestess is yourself."

May laughed.

Her laugh hurt him in an unaccountable manner.

"Do not laugh. I am quite serious. My idea is that—when the charming invalid Mrs. Conroy is left alone you should join her, and play a daughter's part; after a while the transition from her household to ours would be natural. In my work I should require assistance—what more suitable secretary could I find than yourself? A favourite with my wife—a cherished ward of my own! Then while the public life of representation and the social tread-mill would occupy Frances—your society—your assistance—your delicious sympathy, would keep my soul alive—you would be a beloved sister to us both, and your future would be our dearest care."

He ceased, and for a few seconds, silence reigned.

Then May spoke, not too steadily, "I know Frances very well, Mr. Ogilvie, and I can assure you that she would *not* like such an arrangement nor could you expect her to like it! Even suppose I were your sister by birth, by blood, do you think it would be wise or conscientious of me to usurp one of a wife's dearest privileges, her husband's confidence? a share of his daily work? No, certainly not! It would be the worst treachery even if I were a stranger. What would it be in a trusted friend?—who owes endless kindnesses to your future wife!"

"I think, dear May, you mistake the position altogether. I would not ask you to do anything wrong or unprincipled, for the world. Do you not see that Frances is by no means a tender or a loving woman? I should give her all she wants—the most respectful consideration, the complete command of her house, and the selection of her own society. She only needs a brilliant surface. You are too large-minded to be trammelled by the miserably narrow fetters of orthodoxy. For every man, ay, and woman, too, of wider, stronger, nature, there is a visible, and an inner life. This inner life, with which all the precious things of existence are entwined, I wish to share with you."

May shook her head.

"What you suggest is impossible," she said. "To me, impossible."

"The idea cannot be new to you!" cried Ogilvie evidently disturbed. "I have presented it to you before! You have assured me that you are willing to make some sacrifice for me!"

"I would give my life for you sooner than do this," she exclaimed with passion.

"Would you give your life for me, May?" said Ogilvie suddenly placing himself beside her and grasping her hands in his.

"I would—why should I not? Would it be a great gift? What is there in life for me that I should withhold it from you, who have done so much for me?"

"You owe me nothing; you have given a wonderful charm to my life since I took charge of you. My God, May, will you desert me now? I counted so surely upon you—all that is higher, purer, sweeter in my nature clings to you. Have you no feeling for me, May?"

"I feel for you keenly, warmly, but the part you want me to fill is that of a traitor, a serpent in the household! How would you like your wife to have a special man friend to whom she would give her inner life, her fullest confidence? No, Mr. Ogilvie."

"But I swear I should never forget that I was your friend, your brother."

"Even so; as I have said, were I born your sister I should feel bound not to come between you and your wife."

"And I thought that you—you had more regard for me. You are strangely collected—you are stronger—that is, you are more indifferent than I am. Think, my sweet ward, of your own position if you break with me. I fancy Miss Macallan is not disposed to——"

"I can earn my bread humbly in Paris," said May, in an unsteady voice, "and I need trouble you no more—you have done so much—too much for me. Why need I trouble you any more?" She drew her hands from his, and rising, moved to the fire-place where she leant her head against the mantelpiece.

"And you are resolved to give me up—to let me go?" cried Ogilvie who began to pace the room hastily. "Am I nothing to you? May, this talk of friendship and brotherly love, is all false, all hypocritical. Listen to me—I love you! You have twined yourself round my heart, you have entered into my soul—and dwell there! The touch of your hand sets my pulses throbbing. Life is insupportable without you. Do not leave me." He clasped her in his arms. "I am no weak boy to be mastered by my passion. I swear I will be your friend, and friend only; you shall help me to make my wife's existence a paradise of tranquil happiness, and none shall dream of the delicious secret we will

hide in our hearts! Has no feeling of tenderness ever glowed in yours for me? There have been moments when I thought you might have recognised and returned the love you inspired. Hear me May! do not let any ghastly spectre of traditional propriety spoil our lives? Be my beloved and trusted sister—friend—what you will. Have I no place in your heart?"

"I have loved you," cried May extricating herself resolutely from him. "I have loved you well. What the kind of love is, I do not know—whatever it may be, parting makes it terribly hard, but I have no choice. I grieve for you, I grieve for myself. How is it you do not see the infamy of the life you suggest? No matter whether we be as brother and sister, or as friends, we should equally rob your wife of what is her due. Think of what *she* would feel if she knew? It is base, it is unworthy. Oh, I wish you had never named such a scheme to me. I knew that whatever came we would have to part, your destiny leads you away. Why, *why* did you not leave me my ideal of you untarnished? In the long years to come I could have looked at it lovingly, admiringly, and now——"

Her self-control gave way and she burst into passionate tears. Ogilvie stood silent and still, an evil look of mortification and anger on his dark, stern face—gradually it softened as he watched May's pliant figure bent forward where she crouched on the sofa, her face hidden in her hands, her bosom heaving with the sobs she could not suppress.

"I have been cruelly deceived," he said at last, "self-deceived. I thought we understood each other better—or I should not have fruitlessly distressed you. But, May, I have not said my last word! Even if we do part—there is much to arrange."

"I think not. I could go away to-morrow if necessary."

"Promise me you will not go to-morrow."

"No, I will not go to-morrow. But, Mr. Ogilvie, do not come to see me any more. It would be far—far kinder to stay away. Let it be good-bye now."

"No, not to-day. I shall see you again. By Heaven you are stronger than I am."

He seized her hands, kissed them repeatedly, and was gone.

(To be concluded.)

"Rabel."

BY ELSIE RHODES.

ONE of the most warmly discussed topics of the present day is that of the sphere of woman. Our great-grandmothers would have held up their hands in horror at the bare mention of many ideas, now generally accepted, as to the legitimate channels of her influence. But, one after another, disabilities have been removed, and for the past quarter of a century woman has been steadily coming to the front. Her advocates are claiming for her still wider fields for the exercise of her influence for good or for evil.

She has already undertaken many of those duties which in the past were deemed only suitable for man; she is to have a vote; she is to take her seat in Parliament. Where will they draw the line, if, indeed, they draw it at all?

Surely, if a woman has individuality enough for her influence to be worth anything, by simply living her life she will as certainly leave the mark of her mind and heart in the society around her as she would were she to move large audiences to smiles, tears, or momentary enthusiasm, by her eloquence. Probably, as it is easier to talk than to live, the latter channel of influence will be the more popular.

But the woman whose influence has been exceeded by few; who was a potent factor in laying the foundations of the German Empire; to whom men of genius and world-wide reputation turned for help, advice or comfort—this woman was the descendant of a despised race; she had neither beauty, great wealth, nor what is commonly understood by the word education; neither had she any social position until she made it for herself. She never lectured, nor preached. She wrote no poems, no books, not even a magazine article! She is a phenomenon well worth a little study in this nineteenth century of ours.

Rather more than a hundred years ago, every Berliner knew the large, old-established jeweller's shop, presided over by a man named Levin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. At Whitsuntide,

1771, Madame Levin presented her husband with a little daughter, who was christened Rahel Antonie Frederike. Other children, three sons and one daughter, followed in due time.

Rahel was delicate, affectionate, impatient of restraint. One would have chosen for her a home ruled by sympathy and wise love.

Fortunately or unfortunately, this blessing was denied her. The father was a tyrant; stern, passionate; the mother a shrinking little woman who yielded everything for the sake of peace. Neither was capable of entering into the thoughts and aspirations of their eldest daughter, and the petty quarrels, the injustice, the whole jarring home-life, could not be otherwise than intensely painful to such a high-souled, finely-strung nature as that of Rahel.

She was an intelligent girl, and finding no intellectual sympathy in the Levin household, naturally sought it outside, and spent much of her time with Henriette and Dorothea Mendelssohn. They were clever, original girls, older than Rahel, and trained by their father, Moses Mendelssohn, to a masculine independence of thought. They had many friends, one of the most intimate being Henriette Herz. At her house Rahel met with clever men and women, and her own thoughts were drawn out and her mind was developed. She was not remarkably well-educated, but she had learned one lesson rarely included in a school curriculum, viz., to form her own opinions and not take them at second (or third) hand.

Before she was twenty she became engaged to a certain Count von Finkenstein. But the nobleman's family did not at all like the idea of his marriage with a Jewess, and a tradesman's daughter! So the engagement was broken by Rahel. But the affair cost her much suffering, and when it was quite settled, she had a very serious illness.

Rahel read much and widely. She was among the first to recognise Goëthe's genius, and to spread his fame. Fichte she called her "dear master." She was personally acquainted with Hegel, Jean Paul, Tieck and others; and later, was Heine's most valued critic.

But though she was able to appreciate, as few others could do, the works of the best writers, Rahel felt her own want of power to express the many and beautiful thoughts with which her

mind was filled. Had it not been for this lack, with what treasures might not German literature have been enriched! But when, in 1803, her *salon* was fairly established, and the house in the Jägerstrasse the common resort of the most brilliant society of the day, her influence was perhaps more widely disseminated and more subtly felt, than if her writings had gone through a thousand editions.

Rahel was then thirty-two years of age. Of her appearance Carlyle says :

"It is a face full of thought, of affection, and energy ; with no pretensions to beauty, yet lovable and attractive in a singular degree. The strong high brow and still eyes are full of contemplation ; the long upper lip (sign of genius, some say) protrudes itself to fashion a curved mouth, condemnable in academies, yet beautifully expressive of laughter, and affection, of strong endurance of noble silent scorn ; the whole countenance looking as with cheerful clearness through a world of great pain and disappointment."

To the house of this woman came men and women of all shades of thought, opinion, and rank.

Monsieur Levin *père* had died ; Madame Levin lived a quiet, secluded life, and took small part in society ; so on Rahel's evenings, her brother, Ludwig Robert, fulfilled the duties of host.

The room was large, very plainly, though comfortably furnished. Coffee and bread-and-butter constituted the simple refreshment provided for the inner man.

But there was a grand piano, on which lay Beethoven's newest Sonata ; and a table where the manuscript poems of Ludwig Robert lay ready for a reading.

The guests entered *sans cérémonie*.

Gentz the politician and diplomatist ; Frederick Schlegel Schak ; Baron Brinckmann (Swedish Ambassador) ; the almost feminine Schleiermacher ; celebrities of all nationalities, young and old of both sexes, met in these rooms. Startling notions were often thrown out ; questions were asked with great freedom and discussions grew warm ; books and authors were criticised ; everyone said freely what he or she thought at the time ; and Rahel was always ready with some deep reflection, a witty saying, or a kindly speech ; keeping her oddly-assorted guests in good humour, and, with exquisite tact, guiding the conversa-

tion into safe channels. Rahel the heart of the whole. She had, for each, advice, comfort, or rebuke. And she was one of those happy women who believe that laughter is a readier means of showing truth, than grief or solemnity. She would have no sanctimonious looks or words! "Absolute truth in all the relations of life," was her rule of conduct. She never flattered, and therefore it is somewhat surprising that she could get on, as the phrase is, with so many people. Theoretically we all like to hear the truth about ourselves; practically a little flattery does not displease us. But whilst Rahel was far too clear-sighted to overlook the failings and follies of her kind, laughing at them, indeed, very heartily, but tenderly and lovingly, so that the laughter carried no sting with it, she had what Max Müller calls "bright eyes," and saw the best in everyone; even the *possible* best. And she chose rather to help her fellows by word and deed than to call attention to their faults.

On one occasion a gentleman repeated to her some remarks he had heard in disparagement of Baron Brinckmann. She exclaimed:

"Faults and failings! Who is without them, and who does not find them out in another when they are well hidden? much more those that lie on the surface. But, for heaven's sake, do not listen to such things again. Make it once for all a principle of life never to judge a man according to his faults, but by whatever he has that is good and excellent. Search for this, and the more you find, the less you will care about his failings. Common minds do the opposite, and on this account they are common. Look at Brinckmann's active intellect, his frank intelligence, his eagerness, his accomplishments, his unswerving friendship, his hearty geniality, which makes attachment a necessity to him. Consider all that he is and does, and then look round and see how many you can find who are his equals. Never listen to those empty gossips! The best judges know how to appreciate him. Ask Schleiermacher, ask Frederick Schlegel—who rarely appreciates anyone—ask me—for I count myself among them—and you hear what I think of him."

There is always a certain amount of interest attached to the first meeting of two people whose destinies the fates have joined.

One evening Rahel called upon a family named Cohen. A young man was reading aloud from Wieland. This was August

Varnhagen von Ense. He was the son of a physician, and had pursued his medical studies until, in 1800, they were terminated by the failure of his father. The boy, then sixteen years old, became tutor in the Cohen family. Bankruptcy of his patrons again turned him adrift, and he went as tutor to Hamburg. After this, he studied for some time at the Halle University under Schleiermacher. In 1805 he visited Henriette Herz, and there met Rahel again, and was very much drawn to her. A year later he came to Berlin to study medicine under Horn; and one snowy day Varnhagen met Rahel and a lady whom he knew walking together "under the lindens." Happy moment! Before he left them he had an invitation to Rahel's *salon*.

In Varnhagen's *Memoirs* he gives a lively account of the evening, and then says:

"We separated in good time in a mood of elevated thought which I indulged for some time out alone in the starlight, while I vainly scanned my past life for such another evening. My impatience would only allow a few days to elapse before repeating my visit. My confidence grew so rapidly, that I soon felt myself justified in coming every evening. I was eager to follow up these new ideas; to come into closer contact with those original truths and grand conclusions which she opened out more strikingly before me at every step; to enjoy and share those emotions, penetrated with intelligence, of which I now became aware. . . . I found myself face to face with the phenomenon that Rahel, in the same measure that others seek to misrepresent themselves, strove to reveal her true self. She would speak of her adventures, sorrows, wishes, hopes, though all might be to her disadvantage, though they might appear to her as false and wrong, with the same unconstrained and profound truthfulness as though all were equally flattering and fortunate. This straightforwardness I have never seen equalled in any other human being. . . . Rahel gave to every word, however indifferent, a charm of life, a character of truth and originality, which changed the ordinary into the extraordinary. In this way I breathed a new atmosphere, which affected me like poetry, and yet was the reverse of what is commonly so-called. It was reality instead of illusion, the actual instead of the seeming. In her presence I was fully conscious of having before me a true human being, that glorious creature of God in its

purest, most perfect type. Heart and intellect in lively interchange, active life stirring in every fibre, the whole nature a living harmony: everywhere original and naïve utterance of, thoughts, grand in their simplicity and wisdom. This nature expressed itself outwardly in word and act, in a manner characteristically prompt and clever. All this was animated and warmed by the purest goodness, by an ever active love of humanity, the tenderest respect for each one's individuality, the liveliest sympathy for the joys and sorrows of those about her."

We have lingered long over this social part of Rahel's life, because during these years was laid the foundation of her enormous influence. It will be remembered that public affairs in Germany were in a most unsettled state. Partly for this reason, intellectual men and women interested themselves more than usual in literature, and in that still more exhilarating thing good and witty conversation. And conversation as an art was introduced into Germany, it is said, by Rahel Levin. The frequenters of her *salon* did really try to express their thoughts in the best possible way.

But the war put a stop to these delightful evenings; the brilliant talkers were scattered far and wide, many of them proving by their deeds that the high principles and earnest patriotism expressed in the lighted rooms were something deeper than mere talk!

Varnhagen, and Alexander von Marwitz, a great friend of Rahel's, joined the Austrian service, and were together during a great part of the war. They both almost worshipped Rahel, and when either received a letter from their divinity, he shared it with the other. And what courage and hope were conveyed to these and other brave patriots in Rahel's letters!

Her own life was not smooth just then. The Levins, like hundreds of other families, were in pecuniary difficulties; the large house in the Jägerstrasse was given up, and Rahel was established in furnished apartments: ill with all the worry and anxiety, dull without the accustomed society, her heart bleeding for the woes of her country, yet working for it by her letters now that other channels were for the time closed. Her love of liberty amounted to a passion.

In the summer of 1811 Rahel went to Teplitz. There she met Varnhagen and many old friends. Politics were the chief

subjects of conversation, and the company embodied the political discontent of Germany. The popular Duke of Weimar stayed quite near to Rahel's house. In spite of her small means she held her position in society, and even contrived to give help to those more needy than herself. Beethoven was there, and would often play his unpublished compositions to her. Happy Rahel!

At the close of the summer she went to Dresden; Varnhagen to Hamburg. In 1813 he took arms in the Russian service, under General Tettenborn; and Rahel, back in Berlin, was no longer dull, for the war was filling the hospitals with wounded men, and at last her passionate patriotism found an outlet in definite action.

Bad management and unprincipled agents had together brought the hospitals of Germany into a terrible condition; and Rahel, with her passion for benevolence, immediately set about doing what she could to mend matters.

Varnhagen wrote for the *German Observer*, and Rahel sent him this letter:

"Berlin, April 20th, 1813.

"DEAR, GOOD AUGUST,

"In this terrible time do make an effort to write something about the hospitals. . . . You must tell people plainly, earnestly, how it is the most dreadful of all sins to cheat the sick and helpless; that every town which will deserve the name, which has a church within its walls, and lays claim to justice, human or divine, must give up its most honourable citizens personally to undertake and superintend such work, so that no agents can again make their fortunes out of the hospital."

She wrote to influential people, spread what she knew on all sides, worked among the sick to the very verge of her strength, and rejoiced with her whole heart when the people responded to the call for help with money, food, clothing, and assistants. "I went to my own people first," wrote the Jewess, "and they have given all they had." There were committees in different towns; at Breslau a young girl sold her hair to be able to give something to the good cause—perhaps a really great thing in

itself; at least, one that shows what an interest Rahel had excited.

In the early summer she went to Prague, and stayed with Madame Brede. Here again was abundant work for hand and brain and heart.

Wounded soldiers of the three hostile nations needed help. Rahel, Madame Brede and Frau von Reimann soon formed a centre of aid. Rahel plied her friends with letters, and much money was sent to her. She told Varnhagen :

"My intimate friends assist me like angels; I have helpers of all classes. . . . God has smiled on me, I can help a little."

Her own letter to Varnhagen, written in October, gives a graphic account of her daily life, and shows the spirit in which she devoted herself to humanity.

". . . . I am in communication with our commissariat and staff - surgeons. I have abundance of charpie, linen, bandages, socks and shirts. I have gratuitous cooking in several quarters of the town. I look after thirty or forty soldiers myself. I arrange and see to all, making the very utmost of my resources. On this account I depute nothing to other people. I despise the help of the public officials, as well as the public thanks which would then come to me for doing my plain duty. But time I have not. The correspondence, the accounts, addresses, receipts, walks, consultations, all my small beginning, in fact, branches out into a large business. And I tell you of it all because you will be glad. My countrymen come to me for advice, help, comfort, and God permits me to give it to them, so insignificant, poor, low-born as I am! I am ashamed that God has sent to me the happiness of helping, and comfort myself in my inaction, while you are fighting with the thought that I can thus heal and help. I know when I have said the right word of consolation at the right moment by the sudden smile of joy that breaks out from under the cloud on a suffering face."

And when Rahel was so indisposed that she was forced to stay in bed, she had her bureau drawn up to the bedside, and so transacted her business.

The strongest constitution might well have broken down under the strain. Add to all this, terrible anxiety about

Varnhagen, of whom she had heard nothing definite for two or more months, and we are not surprised to find she was ill, and confined to the house for some five months. It was not until May, 1814, that she knew of his safety. Then they spent a week or two at Teplitz, and in the following October they were quietly married at Berlin.

Varnhagen devoted himself to a diplomatic career.

In spite of the difference in age, the two were very happy together. They settled in a very small house in Vienna.

Where Rahel was, there would be found some good society! But Rahel was unconventional, and loved simplicity. In her old house in the Jägerstrasse bread and butter, and coffee, and simple dress were the order of the day, or rather, of the night. Guests came *sans cérémonie*, and Rahel loved that they should so come. Don't come because you "owe me" a visit! Don't write because you "owe me" a letter! Come because you want to see me; write because you have something to say to me! Such was her cry. And in Vienna conventionality and etiquette reigned supreme. The dress was elaborate; the "refreshment" a formal meal; rooms were too crowded for either comfort or pleasure, and Rahel grew very weary of social and political turmoil.

The Congress was assembled at Vienna. Jealousy, mistrust, and ambition, and the crowd of conflicting interests, threatened to plunge all Europe into war. This crisis was averted by Napoleon's escape from Elba. Many vexed questions were settled speedily; and in June Varnhagen went to Berlin on diplomatic business. Rahel stayed for awhile with Baroness Arnstein, and went thence to Frankfort-on-Maine.

"And then," to quote Victor Hugo, "a most astonishing thing happened."

As long ago as 1795, Rahel had written to Gustav von Brinckmann: "I always believe that everything that is, or that happens, has its appointed influence. Why then should wishes be without result? Wishes that are intelligent, genuine, fervent, such as we think would draw down the stars, these surely must accomplish something. . . . In this case it would be my strongest right to see Goethe. Why is he always to be seen by his washerwoman and boot-cleaner, by aristocrats, and men who write on law and the origin of stones?"

And whether the "wish" or some other influence brought it about, she really did see the man whose fame she had spread, whose works she had criticised, and whom she had almost worshipped for twenty years! Rahel and some friends visited the little village of Niederrad, and her hero drove slowly through the street.

(*To Varnhagen von Ense.*)

" The shock, the delight makes me wild. I cry out, 'There is Goethe!'"

He drove to the little inn where he used to come with the friends of his youth, and :

"I, *your* Rahel, meet him, and make a kind of scene—take a momentary part in his life! When he had driven on I trembled all over for half-an-hour. Aloud and audibly, I thanked God in His evening sunshine."

Ten days later he came to see her, and she said of this visit :

"Goëthe has laid the sword of knighthood upon me. No Olympian deity could show me greater honour."

How often does such passionate hero-worship last twenty years?

After this, Rahel settled for a while at Carlsruhe. She was much troubled with rheumatism, and her health altogether was very uncertain. She felt keenly every atmospheric change; and, in spite of her strong will and determined cheerfulness, suffered from that uncomfortable nervous disease which we deprecatingly call "moods."

In 1819 she and her husband were again in Berlin. Rahel's health would not allow of her going very much into society; and indeed the growing conventionality and superficiality made such visiting far less of a pleasure to her than it had been formerly. She and Varnhagen still kept open house, and the old, dearly-loved simplicity in furniture, dress and meals. But Rahel clung more steadfastly to old friends, and in many of her later letters there is an undertone of sadness, even of melancholy. This can be accounted for partly by ill-health and personal sorrow, partly by the turn public affairs had taken. The people of

Prussia had been roused into a brief enthusiasm for liberty ; but in 1830 " politics " had degenerated into petty cabinet quarrels, and " the people " had settled down again, and went their own way stolidly, leaving Government and the country to get on as best it could—or as worst ! This was trying for such patriots as Varnhagen and his wife : and the former withdrew from public affairs and devoted himself to literature, his chief aim thenceforth being to secure to posterity a faithful account of the stirring times in which he had lived.

Rahel gave him much help, and sympathised with him always. But her health grew rapidly worse. In 1832 gout, rheumatism and terrible nervous headache were constant. Frequent attacks of illness, during which she suffered frightfully, alarmed her friends. All that love and skill could do to relieve her was done, but in vain. In the early morning of March 7th 1833, Rahel died.

" Life is a work appointed for us. Half our duty is rightly to comprehend it, to take firm hold of it, then to bear it."

To *live*. That was Rahel's work—her " mission," and right nobly did she fulfil it. There was nothing theatrical about her. She did nothing for effect, asked for no audience, no applause.

Men came to her for encouragement and advice ; she gave it to them and sent them out to help their country or die in the effort. They came to her wounded, in rags, in danger of their lives from foreign spies, sick, heartbroken ; and she welcomed them, healed and comforted them. They rushed into her room, flung themselves on her sofa and slept ; and she watched over them lovingly until they awoke, when her earnest, hopeful, brave words made them " ashamed even of being tired."

If she did not write books, she did talk ! And, being a deep and original thinker, she talked to some purpose.

She wrote numerous letters—letters witty, enthuſiastic, or philosophic. Often she wrote of herself ; of her thoughts, emotions, gifts, capabilities, strength ; of her failings, and the limitations of her powers. Her self-estimate was wonderfully just. Notwithstanding a tendency to introspection, which was increased by her self-belief in the great results consequent on individual effort, and by the influence of Schleiermacher and others of his school, she remained healthy-minded, affected no

sins, and was far from centring her interest in herself. She had nothing to hide, and was almost childlike in her frankness; but her individuality was allowed to develop itself freely and naturally.

Rahel was too philosophical, too widely read, to accept any sectarian creed. The religion of this woman, with the brain of a Plato, and heart of a St. John, has been briefly defined as "the worship of God through the service of man." Her thoughts on one of the deepest mysteries in life are thus given to a young friend, Count Astolf Custine :

" When our active faculties fail, our intelligence is insufficient, and there is no voice to answer or enlighten, to still our hearts, then we prostrate our soul in prayer. . . .

"Every thought of God is prayer. Holy, true and honest purposes are prayer. Earnest thought, search without vanity is prayer. I must ever pray until God enlightens me, brings me nearer to Him. Why does He let us ask so often? Perhaps because prayer is in itself an independent work, an active progress; so also is thought, and must be equally acceptable to God. . . . One word more. What a man does in earnest, what calms, elevates, strengthens him, is all right, only his inner and outer life must work together; his superficial interests and inclinations must refer themselves to his deeper convictions. Then all is well, and he becomes a true image of God, and not a travesty."

Rahel Levin's religion was one with her life. Who, that has entered even a little into the spirit of that life, cares to ask questions concerning her precise creed?

NOTE.—*The author of this paper acknowledges her indebtedness to Mrs. Vaughan Jennings's interesting book, "Rahel: her Life and Letters." (Unfortunately now out of print.)*

A Note of Enquiry.

OF course I am very fond of Hugh, or I should never have got engaged to him, but he has one peculiarity which is very hard to bear—the habit of asking questions.

Hugh is one of those eager souls who like to get to the root of things. His mind is abnormally active, and he seems to see all the possibilities of a subject when you have scarcely started the theme. He is like an impatient horseman, who never stops to think where he is going, but flies over the fences of the farmer's fields, not minding if he leaves ruin behind him as long as he gets in at the death almost before the others have started. He is a living note of interrogation, and I never see a card "to enquire," but what I think of Hugh Dartmore. He is fatal to conversation, his eagerness being positively destructive. It is very annoying to save up a good story for Hugh, and then have it dragged out of you sharply, as though it were a cork triumphantly extracted with a corkscrew—very annoying to find that he sees all the latent possibilities of the tale, and has imagined a much more dramatic climax. The greatest reserve would melt before this vigorous treatment, and the merest hint of a mystery would be sufficient to turn on a stream of pertinent enquiry, from which the subject came out limp and helpless. Very early in our acquaintance I had noticed this peculiarity of Hugh's, and had made up my mind never to tell him anything unless I was prepared to deliver up the whole. The first thing that I noticed about him was the peculiar eagerness of his eyes—eyes that were not very large, but so singularly bright and keen that they gave an expression of great intensity to the face. We were standing in a crowd coming out of the theatre; several staircases met in the lobby, and there was rather a block in the entrance hall, and I then noticed a tall young man looking eagerly across the crowd, with his eyes looking like two brown birds that wanted to fly. Perhaps there are souls which remember their pre-existence in bird-life, and miss the mode of transit which was peculiar to them. But Hugh was not so much like a bird as like a race-horse, and I have seen many a

thorough-bred with that strange look of eagerness animating just such a delicate frame.

I was musing on these things rather absently, when I became aware that the young man was looking at *me*, and in another moment my chaperone (Lady Carnaby) was bowing across the crowd to him, with a look of extreme amiability on her face.

"What a good thing—there is Hugh Dartmore," she said; "he will soon get us through the crowd."

In less time than it takes me to tell it the young man had come skimming through the crowd to our side; the introduction was effected, and I heard the first sound of the interrogative voice with which I was so familiar in after days.

"Sir Carnaby isn't here?" he said. "Does he never go to the play now? No, really though, never? Doesn't he think it right? I have a cousin who is just like that."

"He is detained at the House," said Lady Carnaby, as soon as she can speak, stopping the impending discussion about her husband's religious views. "He was coming with us; he is sorry to miss the play."

"Have you no one looking after you?" said the young man kindly. "Oh, do let me take you to your carriage."

And we were piloted swiftly through the crowd, the young man talking all the way.

"Did you like the play?" he asked me. "Really though?—Tremendously? What, better than any you've seen?"

"I didn't say *that*," I began feebly, but my answer was swept away before a fresh flood of questions.

"Do you come very often? Really now—how often? Did you see *Lear*, and *Naomi*, and *Niobe*? Do you never miss a first night?"

"Oh, not so often as that," I began, when the young man started on me again.

"Do you always come with Lady Carnaby? You are related to her, are you not? Somebody said you were her cousin, because you go about together so much."

"No, I am not related to her," I answered, as he paused for a moment with his eyes fixed on my face. "My people are in India, and I am stopping with her till they come back. I am awfully fond of the theatre," I added. "I was brought up in a convent, and I haven't seen many plays."

I could not describe the look of intense interest which this remark called forth.

"Brought up in a convent? Not really though? Oh, I *should* like to hear all about that! Did you have a dull time? Were you wretched? Do you think the girls hated the nuns?"

We had nearly reached the door. Lady Carnaby had got separated from us in the crowd. We were wedged in between three fat dowagers, and a man behind me was standing on my gown. Under these circumstances I did my best to respond to the volley of enquiries delivered in a piercing though not unpleasant voice, and honestly tried to paint my convent life in the neutral tints which belonged to it, and to make it neither black nor white. But this scarcely seemed to the taste of my interlocutor; he had rushed from one extreme to the other, and by the time we reached the doorway he was saying:

"Then you were thoroughly happy? You were sorry to come away? Would you like to have been a nun yourself?"

"James will never see us," said Lady Carnaby, looking over her shoulder. "He is the most stupid man we have ever had."

"Wait there a minute; I will find him," said Hugh, with a nice reliable look on his face. And in another moment he had put us in the most comfortable corner of the lobby, and darted out of the door, and singled out the apathetic James from amongst a great crowd of footmen who were standing on the steps.

"I wonder you should remember James—he is new," remarked Lady Carnaby, smilingly, as the young man returned victorious to our side.

"Oh, I never forget a face," said the young man confidently, and when he had put us into the carriage, he shook hands abruptly, and was gone.

"I was going to have offered him a lift," said Lady Carnaby looking after him distressed; "how quickly he went away!—he is like quicksilver, that young man, he seems all on wires. But he is very gentlemanly and nice, don't you think so?"

"Oh yes, he is very nice," said I, settling myself comfortably in my corner, "but he asks a great many questions, don't you think?"

"I have never noticed it," said Lady Carnaby stiffly, and I did not pursue the subject any more.

I found that Hugh Dartmore was a great favourite in the set, and that it was treason to utter a hint as to his faults. He was very bright and clever, there was nothing he couldn't do, and his unerring sight and splendid nerves made him admirable at every kind of sport. Riding was simply a passion with him, and you would never forget seeing Hugh out hunting, riding straight to the death, and flying over the fences, as though he and his horse were one.

Younger men simply adored him, because of his pluck and spirit, and women always liked him, because he was very sympathetic in spite of his masterful ways. The fault I have mentioned grew out of his extreme interest in life, he wanted to know all about people, to get to the root of everything, and set to work promptly without much considering the means.

Personally he had an unpleasant effect on me. I am rather slow by nature, and I have a Scotch ancestor in the far distance who inspires me with a strong aversion to giving anyone an inaccurate impression, and it was almost impossible to be accurate with Hugh, he jumped to conclusions so fast. I never saw Hugh without feeling I had said something I had not intended, and I remembered the words of the Arab proverb which says that the spoken word never returns.

I believe on my side I was something of a puzzle to Hugh. There were many things about me which he could not quite make out. He was never quite certain as to the precise effect my convent life had had on my religious belief, and he could not tell whether I was very reserved or only extremely shy. The subject of my religion seemed to fascinate him, he returned to it again and again, and he almost lived at Lady Carnaby's, during the time of my visit.

There was a certain aged scientist who married a young lady because some one had told him her eyes had the property of double refraction, and I am inclined to think it was the same desire for study at leisure that made Hugh Dartmore propose to me.

Perhaps I am not doing Hugh justice, he may have loved me for myself, and I am sure no woman ever had a more eager lover. I was a good deal taken by his masterful ways, and I felt as if I could not have dared to say no. He was not accustomed to have his requests set aside, and I think he gained the

day with me because he seemed to think the advisability of the step did not admit of any doubt.

Love and confession grow curiously near together, and I learnt a great deal about Hugh during the early weeks of our engagement. He did not ask me many questions for a while, but poured out all his early life with an expansiveness which was doubtless new to him. I gathered that he had been an exceptionally clever child, and brought up on the theory that he was never to be checked. He told me that a rich uncle had promised to make him his heir if he would only have gone in for the law, as he thought (and I would not venture to disagree with him) that he had especial gifts for the bar.

It seems the uncle had expected more subservience to his wishes than the young man was inclined for, and Hugh never could brook being under an obligation. Hugh came up to town to study law, but getting into a literary set he soon found that his greatest gifts lay in another direction. His stories and poems found a ready market, and his great facility made him an excellent leader-writer. So he had got on to the staff of several minor journals, and thrown off his uncle's patronage and his expectations into the bargain. He had a great idea that he would write a successful novel one day, and I expect this is what made him so eager to get to the mainsprings of motives. He welcomed any new experience for the sake of his art, and was never tired of studying character.

"I like to see people lose their heads," he said once, "they begin to be interesting then."

After the first flush of the engagement was over, Hugh commenced to study me afresh. I found all my characteristics formulated under different headings, and my opinions traced back to their source. Sometimes he would not reply directly to some expression of opinion, but would look at me with an approving smile, as if this sentiment chimed in with his idea of me.

"That's your Scotch ancestor," he would say; or, "that comes of your convent bringing up."

I began to feel frightened of his powers of analysis; Hugh seemed to know me better than I did myself—indeed, I began to feel that it was not myself I saw, but an exaggerated idea of

me, such as one might get of an insect which was always under the microscope. I had never been given much to self-examination, and I trembled at the image of myself as I saw it in Hugh's mind.

Things went on pretty smoothly until we decided to tell Lady Carnaby about our engagement, and we found that she was by no means inclined to contemplate it from our point of view. Hugh as an extra man was a person to be encouraged ; Hugh as my devoted admirer seemed a responsibility too heavy to be borne. Lady Carnaby wailed over the insecurity of his prospects and blamed me seriously for having encouraged him. But she was most distressed that it should have happened whilst I was under her care, and insisted that we must not consider it in the light of an engagement until my father came home from India. She would persist in considering Hugh in the light of a detrimental, and not as a very clever young man who had every chance of success.

I dreaded my father's return, for I knew only too well that he would look at the matter from Lady Carnaby's point of view. I talked it over with Hugh, and we came to the conclusion that he must spare no effort in order to get on to the staff of a good paper before my father came back. It was now the middle of June, he was expected before the end of July. It was about this time that a far-away cousin of mine, Lady Ayrton, returned from Japan, and it was nothing but the courage of despair that induced me to ask Lady Carnaby to invite her to dinner.

Lady Ayrton's husband was quite a cosmopolitan, and amongst his many other qualifications he was the largest newspaper proprietor in the metropolis. Sir Andrew as a diner-out was simply an impossibility ; he never had the time to spend on Society, and moreover he had such a love of good living, together with a delicate digestion, that even in family life he dined at a little separate table for fear he should be tempted to wish for the things which other people were able to eat.

But his room was as good as his company, he was only to be managed through his wife, so if you pleased her you pleased him. I had always been a little in awe of her when I was a child, and vaguely remembered her as having a very positive manner, combined with a slight hesitation in her speech.

I had not thought of her for years, but she suddenly became all important in my eyes, as she might be the means of getting an appointment for Hugh. They wanted new writers on the *Daily Questioner*. I examined the leaders with a critical eye, and seemed to see the old fogies who had written them, just as I could always fancy I saw Hugh's clear-cut features and keen, bright eyes behind the incisive sentences of his literary compositions. Lady Ayrton then was our hope of success, and we pinned all our faith to her getting on well with Hugh. We decided that we would not introduce him as my *fiancé* for fear she should be prejudiced against him at starting, but that we would make him sit at her right hand at dinner, so that she might gradually be enthralled by the charms of his conversation. The conquest effected, the path to success was simple, and I already saw Hugh enthroned in the sub-editor's chair, and spoken of as the future chief.

The eventful evening came, and Lady Ayrton appeared. She came later than anyone else, as is the amiable habit of grandees, and I listened to Hugh's conversation absently whilst I kept my eyes fixed on the door. She was certainly extremely late, and whether from hunger or excitement I had acquired a burning spot on each cheek.

"Good gracious, child, how delicate you look!" said a voice; "you're not ker—ker"—and the word came out with a pause—"consumptive?"

It was Lady Ayrton. I was looking the other way when she entered, and I had not seen her arrive after all, and here she was rushing down upon me with that terrible hesitation before the most important word which used to frighten me when I was a child.

"Oh, no, Cousin Fanny, I'm not consumptive—I'm very strong indeed," I replied, but I felt my anxiety had given me a feverish look, and I could not put as much warmth into my welcome as I desired.

I looked on anxiously whilst Lady Carnaby presented the very dull man whom we had decided should escort my relation in order to set off the superior charms of Hugh.

General Hawkshaw was devoted to the pleasures of the table, and the only person who could cordially have approved of him as a dinner-out was the cook. The brightest eyes in the world

would not have distracted his thoughts from the *menu*, and he never attempted conversation till he was well past the second *entrée*.

I would not go down with Hugh for fear our relationship should be detected, and as I watched the scene from the other side of the table I could not help mentally comparing General Hawkshaw and Hugh. How well Hugh looked in evening dress, with his dark hair and striking features accentuated by the expanse of white shirt front! What an old scrub General Hawkshaw looked beside him! and could anybody want to talk to a red-faced man with little grizzled whiskers?

Matters of taste allow of a wide diversity of opinion, and oddly enough, Lady Ayrton did not seem to share my ideas. She had barely glanced at Hugh since the moment when she was introduced to him, and she was entering into a discussion with the General about the time when savouries should be served.

"Sir Andrew is very fidgetty about his diet just now," she said, "but when we are travelling abroad he will eat anything. When we were in Russia he nearly lived upon c—caviare. He is quite a ker—cosmopolitan," she added.

The General made no response, as he was engrossed in the attractions of his soup, so Lady Ayrton turned to her right-hand neighbour, and asked him if he had heard that a certain well-known poet was ill.

"No, really though?" cried Hugh, "is he ill? What, very ill? Isn't there any hope? Is he dying?"

"I d—didn't tell you he was der—dying," gasped Lady Ayrton, with the appearance of a person who had received an unexpected shower-bath. "I only heard it mentioned that he was taken ill in Per—Per—*Paris*!" (The last word coming out like a shot.)

"Ah, Paris," said Hugh carelessly. "I have many acquaintances there. Do you happen to know Madame Montiflore, who lives in the Rue Choisi?"

"Yes, I have mer—*met* her," was the response, "but I don't ver—*visit* her at all."

"No, really, though? Don't you like her? I thought she was very interesting. Have you heard some story about her?" lowering his voice; "don't you think she's proper?"

"I ner—never said she wasn't per—roper!" cried Lady Ayrton aghast, but Hugh had turned aside to help himself to the *entrée*, and never heard her reply.

"You are a great spiritualist, are you not, Lady Ayrton?" asked Hugh (he was always intensely interested in other people's beliefs). "What, really? Do you believe in the whole thing—table-turning, and Mahatmas, and all that?"

"I never said I believed in ter—ter—table-turning," said Lady Ayrton with a kind of gulp, "but I have seen so many odd things, I should not like to say I der—didn't believe in sper—irits."

"Really though? You're a Theosophist?—believe in Buddhism and all that? Have you *seen* a ghost? really though?—what, *quantities*? I'd give anything to see a ghost!"

"I der—didn't s—say I'd seen ker—*quantities*," said Lady Ayrton emphatically; "but a ve—very odd thing happened the other day, when I went down to st—ay at Millhead. It's an old family place of ours," she continued, anticipating Hugh's query this time, "and it seems it is haunted by the ghost of a lady who wer—walks in the corridor. Every night at twelve o'clock, I heard foot-steps pass my door, and when I told them at breakfast next day, they all said yes, it was the ghost."

"Then you've *seen* her?" cried Hugh, with eager curiosity; "really though, seen a ghost? You ought to report it to the Psychical Society. You've seen a ghost! what was she like? Could you see right through her? Was she like an old picture, or what?"

"I der—didn't say I'd ser—*seen* her," said Lady Ayrton, her stutter getting worse every minute, "I said I'd her—heard her wer—wer—*walk*."

"Heard her walk? How do you know it was she? It might have been only the wind."

"It was not only the wind" (with disdain). "I tell you I heard her foo—foo—foo—*foot-steps*." (The stammer gets worse and worse. If only Hugh would leave spiritualism alone!)

"Ah! but even so! Foot-steps! It might have been the cat."

The indignation of my cousin knew no bounds. Gathering herself together, to administer a crushing retort, she exclaimed:

"There *were* no—ker—ker—cats in the ker—corridor!"

It was meant to be crushing and impressive, but it was a bad speech for a stammerer, and the sentence came out amidst a shower of c's and k's which was almost like a display of fireworks. Every one had stopped talking to listen, and the painful expressions on the circle of faces was something that I shall remember to my dying day. They were all too polite to laugh, but it was agony to resist. I hastily sipped some sherry, and I never was so near choking in my life.

"*Hugh!*" I cried reproachfully a little later on, when my lover came towards me as I sat upstairs quivering with annoyance in the back drawing-room. "*Hugh!* how could you talk of spiritualism like that? You know it's a sore subject with Lady Ayrton."

"No, really though?" said Hugh, earnestly; "does she care much about it? She's a nice woman rather, but why does she stutter like that? Has she been always so, do you think? Don't you think she could be cured? Why does she stutter?"

"You *made* her!" I cried indignantly; "what made you ask her all those questions? Don't you know that questions are fatal to a person who stutters? The more you ask questions, the worse they will get—and you never left off—you asked one before she had got out her answer to the other."

"Oh, I didn't!" exclaimed the unconscious Hugh, looking at me with a face of amazement. "I'm sure I don't ask many questions. You don't think I ask many, do you?"

"You do nothing else!" I cried, pouring forth all the vials of my wrath; "have you always been like this? didn't your parents check you when you were a child?"

"They always answered my questions," said Hugh; "they said it was clever, and I should not be checked."

"Well, you're checked now," said I miserably, "you have ruined your chance with Lady Ayrton. Oh, what am I to do with a person who goes on like this?"

"This is your French grandmother coming uppermost," said Hugh thoughtfully, as he noted my unusual excitement; "never mind Azélie, I will make a better impression next time."

I consulted with Lady Carnaby, and she said she would ask Lady Ayrton again next week. She would look up a distinguished traveller for her, and make him the excuse of the

short invitation ; and Hugh should be invited again, and warned not to ask a question on pain of death.

Hugh was paying a call when the answer came, and Lady Carnaby tossed him the reply without having examined the last page.

I glanced over Hugh's shoulder and saw him go as red as fire. On the last page was a postscript :

"Is that dreadful young man coming who asks so many questions? If so, don't put him next me again."

This was Lady Ayrton's note of enquiry. And this is how Hugh ruined his chance.

Our engagement was broken off by our elders, and the eager face and the piercing voice vanished from my horizon altogether. I missed him sadly at first, but perhaps Fate knew best after all. I am not a person of many ideas, and my interest for Hugh would have gone when he had mastered all the details of my character, and I should have had no more interest for him than has the butterfly to the collector, when he has once labelled it correctly, and stuck it through neatly with a pin.

LUCIE H. ARMSTRONG.

The Long and the Short of it.

THE LONG OF IT.

"WHAT can I do for you?" asked Eardley, in his usual urbane manner.

The doctor was a tall and handsome man, with a charming address—everyone knew and liked Eardley, the throat-specialist. The patient who stood before him (he had motioned her to a chair, but she had not seated herself, and therefore he himself remained standing) was a young woman of six or seven and twenty. She was not shabby, but her dress was simple and inexpensive in the extreme, and there was a want of fashion and elegance about it which betokened bad taste or poverty. Not the former, surely, because of the coils of soft dark hair arranged so exquisitely under the cheap hat! The latter, of course, because there was a little patch upon the side of the shoe! And she was not pretty—not at least as the superficial eye counts prettiness. For she was spare of figure and pale of cheek, and her features were irregular and anxiety was written on every line of her face. But there was the luxuriant hair which curled so gracefully round her slender neck and small ears, and there was a bright light in her large eyes, limpid with repressed tears, and a tender something about the trembling lips that attracted him who looked deep enough. Eardley took in all this at a glance. A person who can discern the inner man is likely to be keenly observant of natural traits.

"What can I do for you?" he said, glancing at a little card which lay before him on the table, on which was inscribed the name of "Miss May Burns."

The patient replied in a peculiarly sweet voice, low and such as Shakespeare considered excellent in woman.

"Before I tell you, I must say that I have no money—at present, and I must ask if you will be so very kind as to let me be in your debt till Christmas. I know it is a very unusual thing," she said hurriedly, "not to offer a doctor his fee immediately on consulting him. But—but I have no money till Christmas, except what I want for daily expenses, and—and I

earn my living—my own and my sister's living—by singing and teaching singing. And my throat is so—*so* important! It is all I have," she said, looking at Eardley with an expression of entreaty.

"Of course," he said kindly, "never mind the fee. Sit down and tell me all about it."

She sat down, wiping her eyes, which were full.

"I do mind the fee, and I shall mind it till it is paid," she said. "But I shall have money at Christmas, and then yours will be the first claim."

"You must not trouble yourself about it," said Eardley.

Then he put on his professional manner, which carried hope with it, and examined into her case.

"You mustn't be anxious," he said, at the end of the interview, "there is nothing very seriously amiss with your throat, but it wants watching and I should like to see you again. I should like to be sure," he said, smiling, "that you obey my injunctions as to the milk and the mutton-chops, and that I can only tell by seeing you. This is Monday. Can you make it convenient to see me next Monday, and every Monday for the next few weeks?"

"Every Monday!" faltered she, "every Monday! But Mr. Eardley——"

"If you are thinking about the fee, pray cease to do so," said Eardley. "I——"

"But I must think of the fee," interrupted she. "If I hadn't known that I could afford the fee at Christmas I should have gone to the hospital. I should have gone to the hospital, only I couldn't afford the time," she said.

"You shall pay me the fee for to-day's consultation," said Eardley. "But your case is one of peculiar pathological interest, and I shall consider that you will pay me amply by giving me the opportunity of studying it. Will you be here at half-past nine on Monday? Then I can see you before my usual hour for receiving patients, and you will not have defrauded me of a moment of the time that is my money. Will that do, Miss Burns?"

I know not if Eardley lied. It is not within my province to pronounce upon the pathological interest of any case appertaining to any doctor, and I have no right to say that Miss May Burns'

weekly visits to Eardley were unnecessary. But I shrewdly suspect that those half-hours of her time were imperiously demanded by something within Eardley's breast that had never stirred—or had only faintly stirred—until now. *Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?* At all events, he was urgent in pressing his desire upon Miss Burns, and she presently consented, looking trustfully at him out of her sweet eyes.

"And I will bring the fee on Christmas Eve," she said, rising. "That will be a Monday, and the schools where I teach will all have paid me the week before. Will it be a guinea, Mr. Eardley?"

"Yes," said Eardley, whose fee was often treble, and always double, that sum."

Then Miss Burns went away, and Eardley thought a good deal about her till she came again on the following Monday, and he continued to think more and more about her as the autumn and early winter weeks slipped away, until it came to pass that she occupied every spare moment that his mind could detach from pathological interests, and half-past nine on Monday morning became the pivot on which his whole week turned. During these precious half-hours, Miss Burns' throat did not furnish the entire subject of conversation. Not that Eardley ever dreamed of flirting with his patient—he would have scorned to take so mean an advantage of an unprotected girl—but he contrived to insinuate a little of his own history into his talk and to extract a good deal of her history out of her. Her father had been a clergyman, he learnt, and had died, leaving his wife and his two daughters inadequately provided for. Moreover, Mrs. Burns had been a bad manager, and what little capital she had, she had recklessly squandered.

"But I mustn't complain," said May. "A good deal of it was spent on my musical education, and my voice is my capital. If I can only keep it, so that Janey may never want!" she cried, lifting eyes of unconscious entreaty to the man who, she thought, held her vocal powers in his hand.

Mrs. Burns had died when May was twenty-one, and the sisters were left all but penniless.

"We have twenty-five pounds a year," said May. "But that is a nucleus. It pays the rent of our room and something more. My voice does the rest."

"Why doesn't your sister work too?" Eardley asked one day.

"Janey is not like other people. You would call her an idiot," said May, simply. "But she can dust the room and even buy things, if I give her the exact money. She is my half-sister," added May, with an unacknowledged desire to make Eardley suppose that the mental aberration might come through her step-mother.

After that revelation, Eardley—who, indeed, had wavered very little from the first—made up his mind to ask May to be his wife. And he determined that he would put this momentous question to her on Christmas Eve. Eardley saw no patients on Christmas Eve. Indeed, but for May, he, who had never spent Christmas in town in his life, would have been off into the country on the Saturday before. But this year he had announced his intention to stay at home, and he had asked a kindly old maiden cousin to stay with him, so that, if May should say yes, she and Janey could come and dine with him. So he looked forward to Christmas Eve as if he had been a boy, instead of a man nearing forty. He had laid all his plans neatly. He would not discomfort May by proposing to her in his consulting-room. Eardley possessed a quite old-fashioned chivalry, and he considered that the man who proposed to a woman in his own house did a mean thing. *He* would not make his lady-love uncomfortable, supposing—Ah, Heavens, *supposing!*—she wished to say no. He would make some excuse to walk a little way with her, and then——It would be in the street, no doubt; but if only May accepted him, he could bring her back to the house, to the chaperonage of his cousin, and—Eardley could not have spoken his fond imaginings.

But Christmas Eve came and went, and May never appeared. It was densely foggy, and Eardley tried to believe that the fog had hindered her. She would come the next day or the day after he told himself. Certainly she would come to bring the fee, which she had not forgotten, and had mentioned many times. But he waited day after day, in vain. May never came.

I do not think that the maiden cousin enjoyed her Christmas much, and she told her other relations that bachelorhood was spoiling Eardley, and that he was growing very dull. Other people thought him changed. He was just as clever, they said

but less genial. They did not know that his heart was slowly breaking.

And May?

After a long and weary search, Eardley found her in a pauper lunatic asylum. The young woman, they told him, had been knocked down and run over in that terrible fog on Christmas Eve. She had been taken to the hospital, but it soon became apparent that her injuries were cerebral. Her mind was gone; she spoke but one unmeaning phrase, and they sent her to an asylum.

She laughed foolishly when Eardley spoke to her. She did not know him.

"Here's the fee," she whispered. "You have been so kind. Here's the fee."

For an instant she showed him an envelope, then clenched her fingers over it.

Eardley turned away; his heart was sick.

"It's the only thing that makes her angry," said the attendant, "if we attempt to touch that envelope. Otherwise, she's as gentle as a lamb, and sings all day like Jenny Lind. There's a sovereign and a shilling wrapped up there. We looked once, when she fell asleep and relaxed her hold. Yes, it's very sad. We often wonder who the fee was for!"

THE SHORT OF IT.

"YU—US, poor devil, it's a case of blighted hopes. Fell in love with a patient, and the very day he'd settled to square it all up with her, don'ty'know, she managed to come a cropper, and when they picked her up, her top-storey was gone, and all she hammers at is, 'The fee! the fee!' Like-Thomas-à-Becket's mother and all that, eh? what? No, the poor beggar hasn't married. He's got the girl—by-the-bye, she must be an oldish old maid now—in some first-class place, and her sister too—a blooming idiot whom he fished out from somewhere—and he pays the piper. Must you go, old man? Well, that's all about it. It's a queer world, isn't it? Ta-ta."

FAYR MADOC.

TO M—.

I.

IF I could live, as once I lived,
Near you, the world should go its way,
Blaze, burn and deaden ; flare and fade,
Leaving one little nook in shade,
Twilight, yet day

II.

If once I lived, as I could live,
Purer by thought of you, 'twas not
Because your face was fair, or Love
Had touched with light of suns above
My darker lot.

III.

I lived, I live, and I shall live,
And die and live again in you
When Death swoops conqueror down the sky
Because Truth only cannot die,
And you are true.

R.

Over the Cordillera of the Andes.

FROM LIMA TO OROYA.

BEFORE endeavouring to describe this journey, it may be well to explain that Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, February 12th, 13th, and 14th, of 1893 were Carnival days in Lima. During these days the people "play," *i.e.*, they throw water from the windows on any one passing in the streets, they also throw powders, flour, colours—use "chisquetes" ("ladies' teasers" in English), "globos," or india-rubber balls filled with water; and commit a variety of pranks which are all permitted during Carnavales, and from which no one is free.

The only means to avoid this (to me, at any rate) foolery is to go right away from the city; and as Carnavales are a general holiday, and no business can be done, I determined to try and improve the occasion by crossing the Cordillera of the Andes to Oroya. Without further delay I will do my best to relate my experiences.

Friday, February 10th.

I arose at 6 a.m., and dressing carefully, as one who may encounter dangers and have to depend on trifles, I took coffee, and at 7.30 my friend and fellow-traveller, Don Claude Hermann came, and we went to the station of Desamparados, Lima. We descended to the platform, which was rather crowded, and, taking our seats in the train, we steamed out of hearing of the good wishes of friends who saw us off, at 7.45. a.m. exactly.

The first part of the journey was through temperature and scenes entirely tropical.

We leave the city, and pass a company of soldiers brought down to bathe in the river Rimac. On through sugar estates, where negroes are busy cutting the ripe cane and loading it into unwieldy carts, drawn by patient oxen to the crushing mills; a little further on oxen are ploughing up the young cane. Anon we pass a gorge in the mountain side, where are the ruins of an old Inca town. Above all is the blazing sun and blue sky of

these regions, and on earth the ground is parched and dusty, save where there is artificial irrigation or the river passes, and in these spots the vegetation flourishes with a luxuriance peculiar to the tropics.

After being on the road a few miles, one of the passengers (a boy) suddenly finds he is in the wrong train, as he wishes to go to Ancon—a place on the coast—north of Callao. However, he cannot now help himself, so he has to await, much to his dismay, the arrival of the train at Santa Clara, where he can get out and get a train later in the day down to Lima again.

At Chosica, 26 miles from Lima, the train stops 40 minutes, and we breakfast. When once more on the road we make the acquaintance of two young men, M. Lorraine and Señor Leon, who are journeying the same way as ourselves, in order to make photographs of the line.

At San Bartolomé are a number of natives selling fruit, etc. ; and here the engine reverses, and draws the train out, apparently the same way we have just come—but no ; we see that line below us in a few minutes. This railway is the most remarkable one in the world. It (the engine) ascends the mountains by zig-zags, most difficult to describe, sometimes pulling the train up one incline, then switching on to another line and pushing the train up before it ; but always ascending up to the Galera tunnel, which is the highest point of the railway, being 15,665 feet above sea level. From this point the line descends again to Oroya, which is the terminus, and stands at an elevation of 12,178 feet above sea level, on the other or east side of the first cordillera.

The sensations on a first trip on this wonderful line are various—astonishment that man should have been able to girdle these hoary giant mountains with a railroad, and also a slight tremor lest any accident may precipitate the train into the yawning gulfs gaping on the side and beneath it.

The engines on this line are specially adapted for their work, and use kerosene instead of coal.

Now we cross the chasm spanned by the famous Verrugas bridge, the columns of which are 264 feet high, and from the centre of which to the ground below is a depth of between 400 and 500 feet. I may here remark that the present bridge is the second which has been erected. The first one had columns in the centre and was washed away during the summer rains.

At times the train is grinding on at the foot of a mountain, and above the railway is seen running parallel three or four times. Anon, we rush into a tunnel, and emerge on a bridge spanning a water-course, which boils and foams hundreds of feet below us. Now we are thundering along a precipice, and see at our feet a plain, with houses and river small as a child's toy. The higher we ascend the colder it becomes, and at Matucana, 7,788 feet high, we change coaches, and I put on more clothes which I have brought with me.

At Chicla, which was for a long time the terminus of the line, we see coming after us the "Favorita," a small engine with covered car attached, used by the officials of the line.

Leaving Chicla, a lady passenger had the beginning of an attack of "serroche"; this is a disease which seizes some people who travel in great altitudes. It consists of headache, sickness, vomiting, and sometimes bleeding at the ears and nose. It has not infrequently proved fatal, and indeed some people have died on their way down again to Lima.

The atmosphere grows colder and colder, and at about 5.50 p.m. we arrive at Casapalca, 13,606 feet above sea level. The train stops here, for although the line is laid to Oroya it is not ballasted nor open for public traffic. We alight and go to the Hotel Central, which is the best place here, yet many and many a common public-house in England could boast better accommodation. However, we knew what to expect, and are not fastidious.

I have a bad headache, but manage, notwithstanding, to make a good dinner. M. Hermann also dines fairly well, but the other two are not so fortunate, and have to retire to bed sick and unhappy. A coincidence causes me to meet in the hotel an old travelling companion, Mr. L——, who is here making photos. I am delighted to see him, but he has to leave next morning by the train for Lima, so our time with each other is short.

Casapalca is a silver-mining place; there is one large works there, and several mines on the mountains close to. The miners are of all nationalities, and wear high boots and big felt hats. They smoke and noisily chaff one another, though I must say whenever I talked with them they were invariably courteous and kind.

After dinner Hermann and I went to the railway superinten-

dent's house to request permission to go next day by the "Favorita" to Oroya; but we were unsuccessful, and so returning to the hotel, we went to bed at nine p.m.

The bedrooms in the hotel contain either two or four beds, and have floors made of unplanned, uncarpeted boards. After taking off my coat, waistcoat and knee-boots, I put my revolver under my pillow, and tumbled into bed, only to shout "Caramba!" and tumble out again—for my feet encountered some hard substance coiled up under the sheet.

Fortunately I had retained the lighted candle in my hand (it had no stick, and we stuck it on the table by dropping some melted wax down and planting the candle upright in it), so I proceeded to investigate the cause of my alarm, which proved to be a cardboard box, put in my bed by my mischievous companions. Accordingly I dragged it out, and flinging it at the heads of those who laughed most, I got in a second time, adjusted my clothes, and, blowing the candle out, dropped it on the floor.

Although troubled with a fearful headache I slept fairly well, as did also Lorraine, but the other two could not sleep at all.

Saturday, February 11th.

About 5.30 p.m. we arose, and after taking coffee we went out to look about us.

The mountains were all covered with frost, and the air was of a fearfully cold kind, but withal, very fresh and pleasant, reminding me of a winter sea air on the South Coast of England.

We looked at the mountains just above us, perpetually snow-capped, at the Indians about us, some walking to the silver-mines, some loading llamas, and others driving flocks of llamas from the mountain side, where they have pastured during the night.

Llamas in Casapalca are worth from \$4 to \$6 (say 10s. to 15s.). They are used as beasts of burden, and carry up to 100 lbs. apiece. A llama is an excellent judge of 100 lbs. weight, and if more is placed upon him he doesn't grumble; nothing of the kind, he just quietly lies down, and won't get up again until his burden is lightened.

Often the Indians pierce the llamas' ears and tie coloured ribbons in them, which, in my humble opinion, does not add to their beauty. The llama strongly reminds me of a diminutive camel (minus the hump), particularly in the slouch of the ears,

hanging underlip, and generally cynical expression, which he can put on at will. Some of the llamas showed a strong disinclination to be loaded, and jumped about and squealed like naughty children.

The Indians here (Cerranos) have all the same looking faces; they speak Quechua (I don't know whether it is spelled so) and Spanish, and seem not to be overloaded with intelligence.

We returned to breakfast about 10.30 a.m., and I made the acquaintance of a young Englishman, Mr. Enderby, who did not speak Spanish, and was travelling to Chanchomayo. After breakfast, we went together to the works of the silver-mine; and, by courtesy of a friend of M. Hermann's, were shown all round the different processes, and went some distance into the tunnel which enters the mine by the mountain-side.

Returning, we found there was no chance of a train during the day to Oroya; so Messrs. Hermann, Enderby and I hired animals and rode up a mountain path for a long distance to the snow, and then back again to Casapalca. The path was terribly stony, and in parts so steep that the mules could scarcely descend it.

On getting back to the hotel we had the saddles adjusted, and crossing the river went some little way in the other direction, towards Cerro de Pasco; but the "neblina," or heavy mist, came down, and we had to retrace our steps to Casapalca once more. We lounged away the intervening time before dinner in the bedroom talking. Señor Leon had serroche so severely as to have to lie most of his time on his bed.

After dinner, we went again to the station, where an official told us there would be a cargo train at 6 a.m. next morning for Oroya. We bought tickets, and going back to our rooms, put ourselves to bed early, so as to be up in good time next day.

Sunday, February 12th.

We passed an uneasy night, striking matches to look at the time and about 4.50 a.m. got up by candlelight in the cold. After partaking hurriedly of coffee, we hauled our traps down to the station by 5.50 a.m.—only to find a few Indians there, and the engine standing cold and motionless.

This was an unexpected blow to our hopes, and so we awaited developments. By-and-by, the conductor came, and going to

the office for orders, he said we must wait for an engine to come from Oroya to take the train up. Considerably damped by this, we carried our things back to the hotel, and lounged about until 10.30 a.m., when we breakfasted.

During this lounge, there passed us the funeral of an Indian, who had been killed in one of the mines. The coffin was of rough, strong wood, tarred, and was carried slung by cowhide ropes. The Indian men and women, who followed it, halted now and again to wail and chant songs in Queechua. An American, who was with us, told us that a funeral is a grand opportunity for drinking and dancing; and that, although these people appeared so much grieved at the death of their friend, yet, when night came, some of them would go and scratch up the corpse, and steal the coffin to make a door or something of.

Sunday is a big day in Casapalca, for then the Indians bring in their produce to sell, and the miners come down from the mines to buy, and to meet each other.

The climate in these heights is peculiar. When the sun shines it is hot and comfortable; but once the sun goes in or one gets in the shadow, and it is very cold and, to my way of thinking, unpleasant, although some people seem to like it.

One thing seemed rather strange to me, the Indian men wrap up their legs in a species of coarse wool stocking, drawn up to the knee and bound round with thongs; when these stockings get worn, they are not taken off, but a new pair is put on over the old ones!!! This does not appear to European minds the acme of sanitary cleanliness, but it seems to suit the Cerranos very well, for they are not so fastidious. With the Indian women it is different; they wear no covering of this kind at all, but go bare-legged, having the hide slippers only, which are worn by male and female alike.

After breakfast, we took our things for the second time to the station, and had the satisfaction of putting them and ourselves in the van which was going to Oroya. We were a most mixed company—Enderby and I, English, Hermann and Lorraine, French, Leon and one or two more Peruvians, a German, an American, a couple of negroes, three or four Indian women (two with babies), and a mixed cargo of merchandize, including two or three bales of hay, paint, oil, an iron bedstead, some plants, etc.

Still we were sufficiently satisfied to get a train at all, and about 11.30 a.m. we steamed away from Casapalca for Oroya. I had chummed up with the conductor, who spoke equally well in English, German and Spanish, and carried a revolver sticking out of his back pocket. Further up the line he had to attach a flat car (really a lorry) to the other, and Enderby and I joined him and rode on the flat car, and then with the brakesman on the roof of the first car. It may be well to explain that on this mountain railway each car has a separate brake and a brakesman to work it.

Riding on the roof of the van we thoroughly enjoyed the scenery, although it was cold and snowed a little. Once we emerged from a cutting, and, looking down, saw Casapalca many hundreds of feet below us. Still onward and upward. Crossing bridges over the most fearful chasms, running in cuttings with rocks above that threatened to fall and crush us into nothing; now taking water for the engine from a mountain brooklet, anon passing a few Indians, by a boggy pampa and a green lake, then soon after approaching the famous Galera tunnel. When we neared here, the conductor said he should drop off for instructions, and we had better go in the covered car and shut the doors, for it is never certain how long a train may be in the tunnel, and as it (the tunnel) has no ventilating shafts, the smoke might overcome us.

We were quite willing to do this, and, when the train slowed, the conductor dropped off, as also did Enderby and I; but before we had time to get in the covered car, it put on steam again, and we had to jump on the flat car, or be left behind altogether.

Accordingly we jumped on the flat car, and wrapping our "ponchos," or cloaks, round our heads, lay down and awaited the worst. Soon after entering the tunnel the air was very hot, the water dripped on us from the roof, and with the darkness and roar of the train it seemed truly awful. Before I expected, we shot out of the tunnel and pulled up on a switch on the other side, having passed through the Cordillera (about three-quarters of a mile) in four minutes, and Enderby and I none the worse for our adventure.

Whilst waiting here, Señor Leon took a photo of this end of the tunnel. Then the conductor and another engine and cars

arrived through the tunnel, and we set forth once more, descending always now. Enderby and I rode in the covered cars now with the others, as it was colder, and snowing and raining in what Mr. Mantilini would have called a "dem'd, demp, unpleasant manner."

On the way we passed the engine "Favorita" on a switch, with the officials paying the Indians who work on the line. The landscape was now becoming white with snow, but the Indians did not appear to mind it; in fact I saw them sitting calmly on the ground outside their huts, with the snow falling all around them, and seemingly as contented as the niggers in the sun.

About 4.30 p.m. we arrived at Yauli, a small town standing at 13,420 feet above sea level. Here we discharged some cargo and passengers, took in other passengers, had several flat cars freighted with timber attached, and started for Oroya once more about 6 p.m.

We had left Yauli about six minutes, and were running some eighteen miles an hour, downhill, with a curve of the line to the left and a bank, and on our right a precipitous descent of 100 to 200 feet, when there was a most awful jolting movement. The engine whistled quickly for brakes, and in about 50 yards we had pulled up.

We jumped out to see what the trouble was, and found our engine derailed; she had run off the track passing a culvert, and run some distance on the sleepers, cutting through them like a knife. We were extremely thankful it was no worse, for the curve being to the left we had run off to the left; whereas had the accident taken place a little further down, where the line curved to the right, we should probably have gone down the bank to the bottom. It was quite bad enough, although nobody was hurt, for we were in a desolate region in a snow and rain storm, and it was getting dark.

The brakemen and drivers worked with the screw-jacks and such tools as an engine carries. We happy passengers sat or squatted or lay as best we could, smoking and talking and sleeping; trying to be as cheerful as Mark Tapleys, with the water dripping in upon us—all cold and all hungry.

After between three and four hours the engine was got back again on the track, and we started cautiously without lights once more on the road to Oroya. The remainder of the journey to

Oroya was accomplished without anything of note happening. It was quite dark, so nothing could have been seen had we kept the doors open, which we decidedly did not do, the weather being much too cold. After what seemed an interminable time to us weary passengers, the jolting of the car ceased, the door was rolled back, and we heard the welcome words—"Caballeros, Oroya."

We lost no time in unpacking ourselves, and proceeded by the dim light of an oil lantern towards the only hotel of which Oroya at present can boast, though the Railway Company are engaged in erecting another. It was quite 11.30 p.m. when we arrived; the small bar of the hotel was crowded with noisy miners, and the music of a guitar proceeded cheerfully from an inner saloon. However, in half an hour we were discussing with much gusto an acceptable square meal, having had nothing since breakfast in Casapalca thirteen hours previously, with the exception of a few small dry biscuits.

When we had well satisfied the inner man we inquired about beds for us, and received the cheering answer "No hay" ("There are none").

"Never mind," said we, "give us some straw on the floor and we will make shift with our ponchos."

However, our host managed to put in four mattresses on the floor of the saloon where we had just been supping, and with these we were contented, as we were very tired. Hermann and I occupied two mattresses together, and Lorraine and Leon the other two. We took off our boots, and putting our revolvers under our pillows were soon asleep.

Shortly afterwards a ludicrous event took place, and in this manner. I dreamed a robber had entered the room and was close to me, so yelling out "Asistencia!" I grappled with him, and felt for my revolver. At the same moment Hermann, who was sleeping next me, dreamed a railway accident had taken place, and that the rocks were falling upon him; accordingly he yelled out too, and put up his hands to ward off the falling rocks. As the result, we both awaked shouting, and found we were struggling fiercely together.

Fortunately we had not hurt each other, so after striking a couple of matches to assure us that our alarm was groundless, we sank off to sleep again peacefully until 6 a.m. next morning.

Monday, February 13th.

Having arisen and made our toilettes, which were simple, consisting of putting on our boots and revolvers, we took coffee and strolled out to look at the place.

I must frankly confess that Oroya cannot compare very favourably with London in size and comforts ; indeed, to be truthful, I don't think there are ten houses in the place including the hotel. However, they are building some more, and probably when the railway is opened it will be a busy place.

The bridge spanning the river at Oroya is simple but effective, consisting of six wire ropes stretched across and fastened to stakes buried in the earth on either side ; laid crosswise on the ropes are more stakes, each one tied to the wire ropes underneath by a slip of cowhide. It does not give the passenger a great sense of security to cross this bridge, for it swings from side to side at each step in a most unsteady manner.

Having seen in an hour all that we could of Oroya we made enquiries about a train back to Casapalca, but we could get no promise of one at all. The line had got to be repaired where we had run off it the preceding night, and there might be no engine or train for several days. We had no intention of being daunted by difficulties, having already passed through too many to care.

We wanted to get back to Casapalca to catch the train to Lima at 7.20 next morning ; so we hired beasts and a guide, and while they were preparing we had a square breakfast, got some big sandwiches put up in paper, and Hermann and I had our flasks filled with black coffee and " pisco " (a Peruvian spirit). Whilst breakfasting we made the acquaintance of a Peruvian caballero who was also going to ride to Casapalca.

About 10.10 a.m. we mounted and set off. Lorraine and Leon had mules, as also the guide ; but Hermann and I had each a disreputable, diminutive horse. I was rather in doubt about the powers of my animal judging from his appearance ; but the guide assured me he was equal to the journey, as indeed the plucky little beast proved himself to be.

Lorraine confided to my care on starting a travelling rug, which I tied to my saddle with string, but unfortunately lost about the middle of the journey. Also the flask which I had so carefully filled broke loose from its strap ; and for all I know to

the contrary, may even now be gladdening the heart of some thirsty Indian who is lucky enough to find it.

We found soon after starting that the mules could not keep up to the horses ; so as I was anxious to get to Casapalca before nightfall if possible, I and the Peruvian left the others and pushed on ahead. It was quite warm on leaving Oroya, and the objects of interest on the road were numerous.

Now we cross a flimsy swinging bridge spanning a boiling torrent, again we are cantering over pampa, or toiling up a narrow stony path as steep as a wall. Then we have to descend what is almost like a precipice, and the horses snort with fear. Anon the path winds round an overhanging cliff, with a sheer descent of hundreds of feet to a stony plain lying like a toy below us. Here the trail passes over a plain of rock about three-quarters of a mile wide, glowing with different colours, as red, grey, and white, and the whole surface covered about three inches deep with crystal water.

On arriving at Pachachacra, a small village about one third of the way, we dismounted, watered the horses, and had a modest quencher for ourselves. This delay was only for a few minutes, for time pressed ; so we mounted and began again to follow the track, which wound now through scenery so grandly wild as to exceed my poor powers of description.

The air grew much colder, and we passed a magnificent lake of green still water, lying at our feet in the valley. No birds were there, no leaping fish ; an appalling stillness was over everything, and the only living things we saw were occasionally an Indian or two, or a pack of llamas or donkeys.

I must say that of the two I much prefer meeting llamas to donkeys on a mountain track, for while the former make way for you to pass, the latter take a mean delight in walking so close as to give you an awkward knock with the burden they carry ; and their pleasure in doing this is greatly enhanced if they happen to be loaded with sharp-cornered boxes. I speak from a cruel experience, for one passing "moke" gave me so sharp a dig in the leg with the box he was carrying that I thought at first he had cut my boot through.

As we ascended higher it grew colder, and then commenced snowing. We had to halt a few minutes to tighten the saddle girths of my horse, and we found then that the poor animal was

suffering from a nasty wound on the back under the saddle. I felt very sorry for him, but there was no remedy, so I had to mount again, although I knew my weight must have added considerably to the pain of the poor beast.

We passed a small flat space where several Indians mounted on horses were galloping around and playing carnival by endeavouring to colour each other's faces.

The snow fell heavier, and now and again a flash of lightning would play round the mountain tops, followed by a crash of deafening thunder which caused our horses to start and jump.

Shortly before arriving at the highest point we reached a "fonda," or small inn. Here we halted, and having had a couple of sacks put over our saddles to keep off the snow, we entered and prepared for our final struggle by having some hot weak tea with pisco, and a dry biscuit. Before setting out again, my Peruvian friend lent me his own big vicuña (llama-hair cloth) poncho, and put a large india-rubber cape on himself.

This was an act of kindness for which I am most grateful, for I believe without the warmth of this valuable garment, I could not have done the rest of the journey. On leaving the fonda, the snow whirled down in a regular storm, darkening the air, completely blotting out all trace of the path, and covering us up like snow men. To make matters worse, night began to close in, and we had not yet reached the summit of the Cordillera.

However, we stuck to our work, encouraging the tired beasts; and finally reached the highest point, which is indicated by a rude wooden cross sunk in a heap of stones. The worst had yet to come, for the path was now down-hill and knee-deep in snow, while the air was filled with whirling flakes.

Two or three times I had to take off my hat and shake it free from the weight of snow which had gathered upon it. My boots too, from the toe to where the poncho reached, were one mass of white snow, completely hiding the stirrup.

Now we had to ride across the railway track, and shortly afterwards we came up with a herd of cows being driven by Indians. The path here was so precipitous, that we had to dismount and lead the horses some distance. In dismounting, I slipped and got a good roll in the snow, which, however, did not hurt me, as it was soft and deep.

Again we mounted, and for a little way one of the Indians

went in front to show us the path, begging and cursing all the time for a "copita" or drink. However, as we had not got one for ourselves, we had no means of obliging him, and my friend politely cursed the Indian in turn.

Once more we urged the tired horses to a trot, but night had come. Being quite dark we could not make out the path, and so passing an Indian hut, we roused the inmates to direct us on the right way, during which time the savage dogs of the Indians barked and danced round our weary steeds.

Directed on our road we pushed on again, I feeling uncomfortable from the snow which had drifted and adhered to my left cheek, whilst my moustache was also bearing a snowy burden.

We trotted tiredly along, and to our great joy on turning a corner of a cliff, we saw the welcome lights of Casapalca in the distance. We were not yet arrived there, but we had more spirit to proceed; and so encouraging our horses, who also plucked up again on seeing the lights, we reached the right bank of the village in time.

We had mistaken the path to the small bridge over the river, in the darkness, and so had to dismount again and lead the horses down a fearfully steep bank, covered up to their knees in snow.

All's well that ends well, however, and it was with feelings of deep thankfulness that we galloped our jaded steeds to the door of the small hotel in Casapalca, where we arrived about 7.30 p.m. having been in the saddle some nine hours, three of which were spent in a blinding snow storm. When we had divested ourselves of our snowy ponchos in the bar, the caballero and I ascended to our room and shook hands most heartily, congratulating each other as men who had had a narrow escape from a fearful fate.

In a few minutes we descended to discuss a steaming hot dinner, and we had barely finished when our other companions arrived with the guide. The Peruvian caballero and I were astonished to see them, as we thought they would have decided to put up for the night in Pachachacra, instead of attempting to cross the cordillera in such bad weather.

However, we were delighted to see them, and welcomed them like long-lost friends. M. Lorraine was especially plucky, for he is slightly lame and riding is painful to him; but he bravely stuck to it, though he was so fagged on arriving at Casapalca, that he had to be lifted off his mule and go straight to bed.

We were all thoroughly tired after our eventful day, and retired to our beds about 9 p.m. ; Hermann and Leon having a room with two more fellows, while Lorraine, our Peruvian friend, an unknown German, and I, occupied another room.

Tuesday, February 14th.

The caballero, who did not sleep well, lay and smoked cigarettes most of the night, but we other three slept fairly well until about 5.30 a.m. when we all arose. After taking coffee, we went to the station through the snow, and amid the sincere "Adios" of the friends we had made up in the Cerro, steamed down on our way to Lima once more, at 7.20 a.m.

The return journey was a good one. We stayed forty minutes in Matucana for breakfast, and changing coaches proceeded as far as San Bartolomé. Here we bought some fruit of the fruit-sellers who meet the train at the station, and we also shied the fruit-rinds back at them as the train steamed away.

At Chosica we met some friends from Lima, and they played upon us through the carriage windows with "chisquetes." Also lower down the line, some negroes threw water on the train as it passed, in honour of the carnival ; and at last we reached the Desamparados station of Lima at 3.20 p.m., having we all agreed had a most interesting journey over the Cordillera and back.

I may add that I found great difficulty in making tobacco burn in Casapalca, which I concluded to be the effect of the air in that altitude. I had very cracked lips for a couple of days after my eventful ride over the Andes, owing to the cold and snow.

I thought on my return to Lima that I should be free from the carnival play—as this was the last day, and people do not molest passers-by in the street at night.

Unfortunately I was not to get off scot-free, for just before I got to the hotel for dinner, a young lady in a balcony fairly drenched me from head to foot with a well-directed discharge from an immense garden syringe.

The polite thing for me to do would have been to bow to her and say, "*Muchas gracias Señorita*" ("Many thanks, Miss"), but I was too angry to be polite ; so I just went into the hotel and dried myself as well as I could before sitting down to dinner—deeply thankful that this was the last day of the "Carnavales."

T. MOORE VARGAS.

The Colonel's Wooing.

BY KATHLEEN HUDDLESTON.

"AND is it possible," said Lady Marcia Tyrell, "that I really have a grown-up daughter, a daughter ready to come out! How old it makes me feel!"

She may have felt old, but she did not look it. Her complexion was fresh and delicate, her figure almost girlish in its slimness, and there was no trace of grey amongst the wavy masses of her auburn hair. A very lovely woman was Lady Marcia, and she possessed a charm that is almost as potent over the hearts of men, as is that of beauty, she was eminently fascinating.

She was standing in the drawing-room of her luxurious Parisian flat, and her companion was a little old-fashioned lady who had once been her own governess and who was now acting in the same capacity to her daughter Claire. Miss Uniacke invariably took everything in its most literal sense, and she threw up her mittened hands in mild protest as Lady Marcia spoke.

"You old, my dear! O, how can you say so? Why you can't be more than thirty-seven. Claire is only seventeen, and you were barely nineteen when she was born. You married too young!"

"Yes," agreed Lady Marcia placidly, "I think I did."

She might have added that Mr. Tyrell, the wealthy manufacturer, had been a good deal too old a husband for her, and Miss Uniacke had been thinking of this when she spoke, but Lady Marcia's disposition was joyous and easy-going almost to a fault. Sweet-natured and sunny-tempered she certainly was, and she was a woman made to be loved and caressed, but with all her sweetness and goodness, she was not a woman either to think or feel deeply.

When her father, an inpecunious Irish peer, had married her, almost before she had emerged from the schoolroom, to a man more than double her age, she had gone smiling to the altar. Her poor old husband worshipped her, and she liked him and did her duty by him, and no breath of scandal had ever tarnished

her fair name. When, however, Mr. Tyrell died, Lady Marcia was by no means broken-hearted. She shed a few decorous tears and then her old happy life went on again and she slept and ate and enjoyed herself as much as ever. She never felt inclined to re-marry. She was not passionate enough to feel the want of one all-engrossing love, and her baby daughter Claire, amply filled her life. Almost a child herself when Claire was born, the two had been everything to each other. They were more like sisters than like mother and daughter. They had never been separated until a year ago, when Lady Marcia had been summoned to Ireland to nurse her father through a long and tedious illness, and Claire had gone to a convent school in Bavaria, under Miss Uniacke's charge, to perfect herself in German.

The old Earl was better now, and Lady Marcia had flown to join her daughter, who had come to Paris to meet her, and they had arranged to stay there until the London season began. It was now March, and Easter fell early that year, but, in spite of the claims that Lady Marcia felt London had upon her, now that she had a daughter to present and bring out, she meant to linger in the gay French capital for some weeks longer. Lady Marcia was almost childlike in her capacity for enjoyment, and what can equal Paris at Eastertide?

A maid, arrayed in the daintiest of caps and aprons, brought in tea, and Lady Marcia threw off her heavy fur-lined cloak, for she had been driving with her daughter, and sank into the nearest easy-chair. She took a great bunch of violets out of a china bowl near her and pinned them into the soft lace of her dress.

"Now let us have a cosy chat, you old dear," she said to Miss Uniacke, "it seems such ages since we parted! You shall make the tea, I am too lazy. I don't think Claire will be down just yet, for she had letters to write, so you can tell me all about her. How pretty she is, and yet—not exactly pretty either! I think there is something grand-looking about Claire, and I see a change in her, although we have not been away from each other so *very* long. Has she any admirers?"

Miss Uniacke looked feebly shocked. She adored Lady Marcia, but somehow the latter nearly always contrived to shock her.

"My dear, I thought you trusted me," she said, with an attempt at dignity. "Claire's male acquaintances may be almost counted on my fingers. You forget she is not out. She has

been nowhere since we came to Paris excepting to the Marchmonts'. They give musical evenings, you know, and made such a point of my bringing her, and as they are such old friends and Mrs. Marchmont is her godmother, I thought you would not mind, and then the music is *so good* ! ”

“ And I'm sure the company is the same,” laughed Lady Marcia, “ so don't apologise for taking her. I am going myself to-morrow night. Is that where she met a tall, good-looking man who passed us when we were driving to-day ? Desborough, I think, she said his name was ? ”

Miss Uniacke nodded.

“ Yes, Colonel Desborough. He is a sort of cousin of Mrs. Marchmont's and is staying with them. He and Claire have been trying duets together. He told me her voice was the sweetest and freshest he had heard for years ! And so it is,” Miss Uniacke added, with almost motherly pride in her pupil.

And indeed she was a pupil anyone might have been proud of. She came into the room just as her governess finished speaking, and as she knelt down by the side of her mother's chair, you saw how like and yet unlike, were Lady Marcia and her daughter.

She was tall, even taller than her mother, and her colouring was much the same, but her eyes were not Irish blue, but tenderest, deepest hazel, and whilst Lady Marcia's face betrayed her character, sweet, pliable, and without depth, every line of her daughter's countenance spoke of firmness and self-control.

Marvellous decision and capacity for good or evil looked at you from Claire's long-lashed eyes, and was expressed in the curves of her delicate mouth. As you gazed at her you could not help feeling that she might become either a very good woman or the reverse, but an ordinary woman she would never be.

It was this peculiarity about her face that nearly always puzzled people and made them say :

“ Yes, Claire Tyrell is beautiful, and yet—you would never dream of calling her a pretty girl ! ”

She knelt on by her mother's side, and pulled Lady Marcia's head down till it rested on her shoulder and their auburn hair mingled together. The mother's was every whit as abundant and full of rich colouring as the daughter's.

“ O, mother,” said the girl, with a sigh of deepest content,

"this is lovely—to be with you once more! I have longed for to-day for months, and I thought grandfather was never going to release you. Now we will *never*, never be parted again!"

Lady Marcia's pretty laugh pealed out.

"'Never' is a long day, Claire. You will be marrying soon. I hear you have already begun to sing duets with gallant colonels."

Lady Marcia spoke jestingly, and the moment after she had spoken she bit her lips, and longed to retract her words. She was sorry she had made such a speech to her young daughter, fresh from the convent school, and she felt that what she had said was hardly in the best of taste, and she was refined and high-bred to her finger-tips.

This was so like Lady Marcia. She generally spoke upon impulse, and often repented afterwards, only to do the same thing again ten times in the same day, in her happy, heedless, Irish way; and with it all she was so sweetly and serenely unconscious that she rarely offended anyone.

Claire rose at her mother's jest, and a wave of deep colour swept over her face, but she turned quickly towards the window and neither Lady Marcia nor Miss Uniacke saw that passing blush. If the latter *had* noticed it, it would have revealed much to her, for she knew her pupil's character by heart. For seventeen years, since the girl's earliest babyhood, Miss Uniacke had watched and prayed over her; and if the mother was dear to her, the daughter was still dearer.

"I was telling your mother," she said, as she busily resumed her knitting, "about the Marchmonts' musical evenings, and of how well your voice and Colonel Desborough's went together. You must introduce him to your mother to-morrow night. I think she will like him."

Claire looked at her mother with shining, earnest eyes.

"Yes," she answered, "I think you will like him, mother. I haven't seen many men, but it seems to me he is the only man I have met who is worth talking to, excepting that German professor whom we knew at Bonn last year—and then Colonel Desborough's voice is such a lovely baritone! When you sing with him you can't help singing well."

"An admirable Crichton!" said Lady Marcia brightly. "I begin to look forward to to-morrow, Claire, and, oh! how tiresome! all my prettiest dresses are white, and now that I am

going to take out a grown-up daughter for the first time, it would be *too* silly for me to go arrayed in white!"

Claire did not answer. She had taken up her work and her head was bent over it. She hardly heard her mother's frivolous chatter. She was thinking that she also was looking forward to to-morrow and she was afraid to ask herself the reason why.

The Marchmonts' rooms were as crowded the next evening as such an excellent hostess as Mrs. Marchmont ever permitted her rooms to be. A famous 'cello player was to perform, and the whole of the musical programme was expected to be even better than usual in a house where it was always far above the average.

The Tyrells came late, and of the two Lady Marcia looked by far the most brilliant. The pale green silk she wore threw up her marvellous colouring, and her pretty blue eyes were dancing with the anticipation of enjoyment, and were nearly as bright as her diamonds. -

"Darling," she whispered to her daughter as they made their way up the staircase, "you look quite fagged. You get up too early. Why cannot you go to church at ten o'clock with me, instead of at seven o'clock, like you do. 'One cannot burn the candle at both ends!'"

Lady Marcia was a good woman, and, like all her family, a staunch Roman Catholic, and she had brought up her daughter in her own faith, but she liked to take her religion as easily as she took everything else in life, and a ten o'clock mass, after a comfortable cup of chocolate, was more in her line than a seven o'clock one.

Claire only smiled. It was no hardship to her to get up at six; in the convent, the day had seemed half over by ten.

"Mother," she said, "here is Colonel Desborough. I must introduce him to you now. O, I hope you will like him." And a moment later he was bowing over Lady Marcia's slender hand.

An hour afterwards he was still by her side. The subtle attraction she possessed for all men had cast its spell over him, seasoned veteran though he was. For the last three weeks he had, so he imagined, been rapidly falling in love with Claire, and he had almost decided that she was the only girl he would ever care to have for his wife. This was no light conclusion for him to have nearly arrived at, for he was a man of more than fifty,

a distinguished officer who had seen much service, and who had lived every day of his life. Claire, in her girlish purity, had attracted him as a very young girl will often attract a *blasé* man of the world, and almost, not quite, he had made up his mind to give up his freedom at last. He had not much fear of a refusal. Colonel Desborough was not a vain man, but he had noticed how Claire's sweet face lit up at his approach, and how eagerly she listened to all he had to say. She was talking now to a young attaché of the English Embassy, a beardless youth, whose only merit lay in his exquisite violin playing, or rather, she was letting him talk to her and, "how bored she looked," thought Desborough. "And yet—how much more suitable it would be, as regards age and everything else, if she were to marry some young fellow like Vivian!"

The Colonel felt that he had been very foolish to have been almost falling in love with a girl not out of her teens, a girl who would be in the zenith of her beauty when he would be good for nothing but gruel and a bath chair. And Desborough smiled half bitterly. Then he glanced down at Lady Marcia, who was fanning herself languidly with a fan that was a mass of gleaming tortoiseshell and pale green feathers, and somehow he felt consoled.

Before the evening was over he began to think that Claire would make a most charming step-daughter, and that her mother—well, that her mother was simply the sweetest and most fascinating woman he had ever met.

He took Lady Marcia down to supper, and later on escorted her to her carriage, Claire following them on the arm of a much be-decorated foreign count.

"I will bring you that book that we were talking of to-morrow, if I may," were Desborough's parting words. "They are the cleverest essays that have been written for some time." And Lady Marcia, who seldom read anything deeper than Marie Corelli's novels, said, "Thank you" with pretty earnestness, and added that "they would be in about tea-time."

After that the little drama was played out very quickly.

Nearly every day the Colonel made some excuse for calling at the Tyrells', and when he did not call he always contrived to waylay Lady Marcia on her rides and drives.

Soon all her little world began to whisper about his infatuation for the pretty widow, and everyone knew that it only rested with

herself to become Lady Marcia Desborough. Everyone knew but Claire !

To do both Lady Marcia and Desborough justice, they neither of them dreamt that Claire's feelings were involved in the matter. Claire was not a girl to wear her heart upon her sleeve, and even to herself she hardly acknowledged how deeply she loved Robert Desborough. He was old enough to be her father, and therein perhaps lay part of his charm. She felt that he had seen so much that she had never even thought of ; that he had gone through experiences such as by the wildest stretch of her imagination she could not picture. And then, he was so clever and so handsome, and he seemed so far above her, and Claire could never have cared for a man she could not reverence as well.

It was strange how blind she was to his growing love for her mother. She did not see (although even to prosy Miss Uniacke the fact was patent) that Colonel Desborough's whole soul was wrapped up in Lady Marcia. He had taken long to fall in love, but he had contrived to do so thoroughly at last. Lady Marcia had enslaved him as completely as if he had been some callow youth of twenty. She held his heart in the hollow of her slim, little hand, and in his own eyes his liking for Claire now seemed to him to have been the merest passing fancy. As a daughter he felt that he could love her dearly, but he marvelled how he could ever have thought of her as a wife.

Of course Claire's delusion could not last, but it was very sweet to the girl while it lasted, and the awakening was none the less bitter for coming unexpectedly.

They were returning to England in a fortnight's time, and Claire had been busy shopping with Miss Uniacke. She had been collecting photographs of the different churches of Paris, and this afternoon she had invested in a huge album in which to paste them. Lady Marcia had not been out. Her head had been aching slightly, so she was resting quietly in her own room, and Claire, on her return, found the drawing-room deserted. Beyond it lay another little room, which she sometimes used to paint and read in. It was divided from their sitting-room by heavy velvet curtains, and into this room Claire carried her photographs. It was an untidy little den, but here she could make as much mess as she liked, and here she was secure from interruption.

She worked away industriously for some time, and then she heard the servant usher someone into the drawing-room, and peeping through the curtains she saw it was Colonel Desborough. Afterwards, Claire often wondered what instinct it was that prevented her from going forward to greet him, but something *did* prevent her, and she sat silent. The curtains hid her and she could see him distinctly, whilst remaining totally unseen herself.

She heard him ask for her mother, and then, while the servant went to find her, she watched him walking restlessly about the room. A very demon of inquietude seemed to possess him, and he had just halted by a large photograph of Lady Marcia, taken when she was barely nineteen, with Claire, a baby, peeping over her shoulder, when her mother came in.

Claire lived to be an old woman, but, to her dying hour, every detail of the scene that followed was engraven on her memory, and she never forgot how her mother was dressed that day.

Lady Marcia wore a tea-gown of soft, cream-coloured silk, and she had fastened a big bunch of tea-roses (the Colonel's morning offering) into her waistband. Her pretty hair was gathered up carelessly into a great loose knot. She had never looked more girlish or more bewitching.

"What! are you all alone?" she asked gaily. "I thought Claire was here. And please don't gaze at that very ancient photograph. It makes me feel—oh, so old when I see it and remember what a grown-up young person Claire is now, and she was such a sweet little baby!"

The Colonel was looking at her as if he could never look away. She was a tall woman, but *he* was tall enough to look down on her. Suddenly he bent forward and caught both her hands in his own. His bronzed face was pale with the intensity of his emotion.

"O, Marcia, my darling," he said hoarsely. "I *hate* that photograph. To think that you should have wasted even one year of your sweet life on another man. To think that another man's child should call you 'Mother'! Your past I know can never be mine, but your future may. I want you, Marcia, I want you for my very own. I want you for my wife. You must have seen how I have grown to love you; can't you love me in return?"

Lady Marcia was used to love and admiration. Since her widowhood began she had had more proposals than she could count or

remember, yet—shallow little soul as she was—the earnestness of this strong man's passion struck some responsive chord in her.

She had taken his attentions very calmly as was her wont, and if they had drifted apart she would probably very soon have forgotten him or merely have recalled him as "that nice man, Colonel Desborough, whom we met in Paris." But as it was, for the moment she really felt as if she was falling in love, and she rather liked the sensation !

And Claire ?

Claire sat in the next room as if turned to stone, and listened to the words that were to blight the whole of her young life. There was no uncertainty about *her* love for Desborough. The love that her mother prized so lightly, and could so easily have gone without. Claire's love for him had become, unconsciously to herself, a very part of her nature. She cared for him in a manner far beyond her years ; in a manner few girls of seventeen are capable of caring for a man in.

And this was the end of it ! And the hand that dashed the cup of happiness from her lips was the hand of her own mother, the mother who adored her and whom she adored.

She watched him put his arms round Lady Marcia's slender form, and encircle her in a passionate embrace, and she saw her mother's haughty head, with its wealth of pretty hair, sink submissively on to his shoulder. Then their lips met and Claire bit her own till they bled, in her efforts to repress a moan of bitter anguish.

When she was capable of listening again, her mother was speaking, and Colonel Desborough was gathering up his hat and gloves.

"You will come back and dine, will you not, Robert ?" she was saying with pretty hesitation. "There are quails, I know, but I am vague as to the rest of the dinner. Miss Uniacke sees to all that, and I hope, oh I *do* hope she has managed to get some strawberries. I am so fond of strawberries, and forced ones are better than none."

Claire almost smiled. It all seemed such a farce ! The crowning joy of Lady Marcia's life had come to her, and she could think of quails and strawberries. But Robert Desborough was content.

"Yes, dearest, I will come back," he said. "I shall never stay away from you for long again. Put on a white dress, all white, and wear white flowers in your hair. O, Marcia, I never could quote correctly, but I feel to-day, with George Eliot that, 'the

troubles of youth were worth living through, for the sake of the joys of middle age.' "

Claire's head sunk down into her hands, and so she sat on. I think, just at first, her pain was so great that she was barely conscious of it. O, if he had only kissed *her* as he was kissing Lady Marcia! If he had only whispered those words to *her*. "Sweetheart, you are my life. I cannot live without you!"

"My God, my God!" the poor child thought. "It is wicked, it is horrible! I am jealous of my mother, my own darling mother. O, what shall I do?"

A great longing came upon her to be alone with her sorrow. She felt as if the four walls of the room were stifling her. If only she could get away, into the air, into the busy streets of Paris, she fancied she might be able to regain some amount of self-control.

When she had begun to arrange her album, she had flung off her outdoor garments, but now she put them on hastily, and when she had made sure that the drawing-room was once more empty and that her mother was safe upstairs, she stole through it noiselessly, and let herself swiftly out into the street.

In later life, when Claire, after years of self-discipline, had taught herself to look back calmly on that time, she was never quite able to tell what she had done during those first few hours. She always thought that she must have walked for miles, aimlessly and rapidly. She, who had hardly ever, even in broadest daylight, been out without an escort, and it was now getting dusk.

At last, when she had forced herself to turn homewards, she found herself passing a church, and with a great sigh of relief she crept in and flung herself on her knees in one of its darkest corners.

It was a large church, and save for the glimmering tapers that were burning in front of the various altars, and the soft glow of the sanctuary lamp, it was unlit. The holy quiet, the incense-laden atmosphere, soothed Claire's bruised spirit strangely.

She felt, that while she still possessed her God, it was possible to bear all things, to suffer all things. Alone, save for her Lord, in this, the hour of her great misery, she prayed as in all her pure young life, she had never prayed before.

From above the Lady altar, a marble figure of the Virgin looked down on her, and Claire knelt on, the tears streaming down her face, but all the bitterness gone from her heart.

"O, Holy Mother," she prayed. "Teach me to bear my grief.

Teach me to turn my life to good account, not to waste it in vain repining for what might have been, and for the love that can never now be mine. O, God, keep my purpose firm. Help me to live a good and useful life, and tell me how that life is to be lived."

As if in answer to her prayer, she heard a slight stir behind her. Hitherto, she had been alone in the church, but now she saw that two Sisters of Charity had glided in, on their way back to their Convent, probably after a day spent amidst the slums of Paris.

They knelt down near her and began to say their rosaries, and Claire, as she looked at their sweet placid faces and marked the holy calm that seemed to enfold them, felt that her petition had been heard and answered. She too, might conquer herself and live for others, and in time become a partaker of that heavenly peace, and so obtain "an exceeding great reward."

Before the summer was over two events had taken place. Lady Marcia and Robert Desborough were man and wife, and Claire had entered upon her noviciate as a Sister of Charity in the Rue du Bac.

She did not enter without long and heartfelt opposition from everyone, and God alone knew what it cost her to keep firm in spite of it. Her stepfather, although he was not a Catholic, alone said nothing to dissuade her. Perhaps he remembered the look in her eyes, when he had given her his first fatherly kiss upon his wedding morning, and perhaps a dim perception of how matters were with Claire had dawned upon him then.

His marriage turned out a very happy one. Indeed, with sunny, sweet-tempered Lady Marcia for a wife, it could hardly turn out otherwise. She did not, naturally, see much of Claire, and the only tears she ever sheds are shed when she parts with her daughter, after a flying visit of a few hours' duration.

She has two boys now, handsome, sturdy little fellows, to whom she is devoted, but, fond as she is of them, they can never quite fill the place of her first-born, and every time she goes to the convent she makes her little lament over Claire.

"O, darling," she always says, "of course you have chosen the better part, but I wish it could have been otherwise. The cap is so unbecoming, and I want you so at home!"

In spite of this however, Lady Marcia is happy, for—she never knows the truth!

Sir Harry Gray.

By CHARLOTTE A. PRICE.

IN TWO PARTS—PART I.

PROLOGUE.

IT is evening. The curtains are drawn, the candles are lighted, and I am busily engaged with a task, in which I imagine there are few, young or old, who have not, at some time or other of their lives, either actively, or indirectly participated, viz., re-perusing and destroying old letters. Numerous packets of these soul-stirring documents lie before me on the table, neatly labelled and tied together. Bygone memories awake as I gaze upon them, and diverse scenes stand out clearly in my mind, evoked from the dim caverns of the Past, by the sight of familiar handwriting traced long ago by many loved ones, who are now, alas! dead and gone!

In this age of rapid movement, one incident is soon effaced from the mind by the advent of another; at all events, this is certainly the case with the young, and also with those who have embarked on an active and exciting career. But, at the time when most of these letters were written, life ran on different wheels, and in a distinctly monotonous groove. Then, people thought and acted—especially the dwellers in the country—more cautiously than is customary now. Whether the decisions evolved by the slower-working brains of our predecessors were fraught with greater wisdom, and more calculating foresight, than rule these days of progress and enlightenment, is difficult to decide, but it would appear that fluency of tongue and specious logic go far to win the battle now, and bring notoriety and success to the owner of these dazzling but misleading gifts.

It may be that "distance lends enchantment to the view,"

"Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far";

but it seems to me, that in the "good old times," when I was a

young, light-hearted girl, friendship proved more lasting, hospitality was more spontaneous and bountiful, and that the lives and characters of men and women were more sympathetic and genuine than those of the present generation.

Good and evil, it is true, were mixed then, as now, for so they ever have been, and will always remain. But if "the march of intellect," and "higher education" of to-day, has produced the expansion of mind supposed to follow it, can it be said, that with increased culture, the mass of mankind has become elevated by its stimulating power? That human nature has really improved, and *touched*, not to say *reached*, the lofty ideals held out before its eyes? Of this, perhaps, I am not a good judge, but it strikes me, that the heart of man remains much the same, at the present hour, as it always has been. If vice be not so openly practised, and flaunted in the face of the world; if the laws of God and man are not disregarded with the same barefaced impunity, as was tolerated in the beginning of this nineteenth century, yet the hydra-headed monster of evil has only been scotched, it exists in secret just the same, though fashion, and the voice of public opinion, bid it wear the cloak of hypocrisy and conventionality, and lie concealed under the thin veneer of discretion.

I am well aware, nevertheless, that there is a small army of men and women who are devoting their lives to the suppression of evil-doing, and to the advancement of good works; who, both by example and precept, are striving, by all means in their power, to make headway against the tide of infidelity, suffering and poverty, that threatens to overwhelm and engulf the poor, struggling victims who are caught in its waves. All glory and honour be to this little band of martyrs! Far be it from me to disparage their efforts. But if, here and there, some unfortunate wanderers are rescued by their energetic hands, and landed in safety on the shore, how many, on the other side, sink down to the depths and are heard of no more?

If I have taken a pessimist's view of things, forgive me, dear reader, for I am an old woman now, and burdened with the weight of many sorrows. I know also, that poor suffering humanity toils and sorrows in these days, as in the bygone years. Tragic events stir our hearts, and haunt our steps in the present, as they did those of our ancestors in the past; and,

because such is the case, I think some singular circumstances—which occurred about fifty years ago, in a family well-known to me—may prove interesting, and I venture to give them publicity.

They were related, by the friend of my youth, in a series of letters, which compose one of the packets now spread before me. I have purposely omitted every reference made in them to myself, saving such slight details as serve for links in the story. Happily, at that time, there was nothing in my life to call forth any particular interest; my history then, was a fair, unwritten page, giving no indications of the stormy future, nor of trials that would cloud my spirit, and desolate my hearth.

It is but a few months ago that I lost my dear husband, who left me childless and solitary; for my brave, and only son was killed in the Zulu war, and his broken-hearted, beautiful, young wife soon followed him to the "Silent Land," to whose safe shelter my three other children, in the prime of their youth, were quickly gathered.

Now here, in my quiet room, I sit alone this October evening. Nothing breaks the stillness around me, but the gusty wind swaying the branches of the trees, and the beating of the rain-drops against the window-panes :—

I can hear the ceaseless dripping
Of the rain, and the sad wind
Comes sighing through the poplars tall ;
Sorrow wakes, and fills my mind ;
And my thoughts fly quickly backward
To the unforgotten years,
With sore aching at my heart-strings,
And a weight of unshed tears.

For round my hearth stand vacant chairs,
With their arms outstretched in vain ;
Those well-loved forms, they once embraced,
Will no more come again ;
Ah, no ! they've passed away from earth,
From its griefs and joys are free ;
We have parted ! and the shades of night
Gather thick and fast round me.

Yet, sometimes 'mid the silence
That comes floating gently round,
I seem to hear their footsteps still,
And their voices softly sound.
Then peace steals o'er my troubled soul,
And my mind with eager wings
Sweeps aside the feeble barriers
Earthly separation brings ;

And those dear ones seem beside me—
 I would give the world for speech !
 Oh ! this is grief, that those we love
 Die, and pass beyond our reach !
 Now, I sit here in the stillness,
 Yes, I sit here all alone,
 And I know we nevermore shall meet,
 For they, one and all, are gone !

I hear the sougning of the win
 Through the poplars straight and tall,
 And the dripping of the raindrops
 Adds a sadness to it all.
 I sit alone—my tears o'erflow,
 And my heart is sorely riven ;
 Yet thus my soul is upward drawn
 By links 'tween earth and heaven.

LETTER I.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court, Midnight,

June 10th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

At last my wish is realised, and I am actually a visitor at Fairleigh Court ! The seclusion in which its inmates live, and the mystery that surrounds them, have always created the greatest curiosity in my mind, as you are well aware ; but I never anticipated that the opportunity of being able to penetrate its cause might be given to me, or that I should pass any length of time in the society of Sir Harry Gray and his daughter. However, it is always the unexpected that happens, and here I am !

You know that the "Wicked Baronet," as he is sometimes called, has a great respect and liking for my father ; and he begged him to allow me to pay a visit to Olive Gray, my old schoolfellow, whose health has become very delicate. Poor thing ! Can any one be surprised at it, when she leads such a dull, miserable life with Sir Harry, who is quite a hermit ? I cannot think any father, unless he had the heart of a stone, would condemn a girl to such solitude, as only Fairleigh Court, under present circumstances, can produce.

My father was not very willing, at first, to let me go, but after a little persuasion I won him over to consent.

I have not seen much of Olive, since we were at school together; my mother not having encouraged the intimacy between us, owing to the unfavourable character borne by Sir Harry Gray; and, you may be sure, she did not let me depart without many directions, and exhortations to prudence.

But now that I am here, I am enchanted with this lovely place.

Fairleigh Court is a picturesque old house, the back of which is plainly visible from the road, with its stately avenue of beech trees; and the front view is equally charming in a different way. Terrace after terrace of green turf, gay with flowers, slope down to the borders of a clear, shining lake, overhung with weeping willows. On the right of the house stretch large shrubberies, where inviting seats, under the shade of grandly spreading trees, offer those opportunities for meditation and repose, which are so dear to my soul.

This lovely landscape is a perfect picture of peace and calm, presenting a striking contrast to the perturbed and weary look of its owner, and the sad face of his only child.

To the left of the Court lie wide pasture lands, lately reclaimed from the Forest of Leigh, where sheep browse at their leisure. The sound of the tinkling bell, borne by the head of the flock, falls upon the ear with a sweet, plaintive tone that is very soothing. Large fields of yellow corn will soon help to enliven the prospect. The sight of these far-reaching downs, gives me a feeling of breadth and freedom, as I gaze upon them; while the fresh breeze, blowing with gentle vigour across these swelling uplands, seems, like the bounding waves of the ocean, to elevate and draw my thoughts from this sublunary world, to the happier and unchangeable regions above.

The interior of Fairleigh Court presents rather a sombre appearance, owing to the preponderance of oak-wainscoting in the hall, as well as in many of the rooms; but it suits the antiquity of the family, and the character of the old place. Its gloom, however, is partially lightened by the effect of valuable paintings, sculpture, old china, and a large collection of costly relics and curiosities, which have been accumulated for centuries by various owners of the Court, and which are disposed and

arranged, with taste and effect, in the various rooms of the mansion.

I think you must have seen Sir Harry Gray driving his mail phaeton and pair of fine black horses into Slocombe, with his never-absent companion, Mr. Viner, seated by his side ; but as you may not distinctly remember them, and I wish to gain your interest for this family, I will describe their appearance to the best of my power.

I have heard it, somewhere, remarked, that the natural character of man often displays itself at meal times, and therefore I select the dinner-hour as a fitting time from which to draw my portraits.

We were a party of four this evening.

Imprimis.—Sir Harry Gray. Picture to yourself a tall, thin man, verging on sixty, whose still abundant hair, once fair, is now thickly streaked with grey. His features, of an aristocratic type, are marred by a look of settled gloom and care, and his once lithe, and still vigorous frame has a confirmed stoop, strongly significant of ill-health and brooding anxiety, more than of age. He joined but little in the conversation, and when he vouchsafed a remark, it was generally a complaint of the viands set before him, sometimes accompanied by a thinly-veiled sarcasm, or angry look at his daughter. I observed that he drank nothing but cold water, which I have been told is his invariable custom.

Olive Gray, who sat at the head of the table, looking nervous and *distracte*, is about twenty-three, and a very attractive girl. One could imagine her winning many hearts, if her beautiful face were not clouded and overshadowed by a look of apprehension and pain. Her features, like her father's, are refined, and rendered more so by her delicate health, which shows itself principally, in an extreme paleness of complexion, and a languid, uninterested manner. She wears her hair—in colour, a rich auburn—dressed high upon her small head. Her eyes are hazel, and though generally soft and sad, can flash and sparkle with spirit, should occasion warrant them in so doing, as I have had more than one opportunity of observing already, when they have met the regard of the other guest, a permanent one, at Fairleigh Court, it seems, but over whose continued presence there a mystery hangs.

Mr. Viner is *nominally* Sir Harry Gray's secretary and

amanuensis, but in *reality* his chosen companion, and the confidant of all his private affairs.

A good many stories have obtained credence about Conway Viner, and there have been several reasons advanced, by inquisitive people, as to the cause of his influence over the baronet. I will not enter upon them now, but content myself with describing the secretary's personal appearance and peculiarities.

He has a dark, inscrutable face, and eyes which seldom meet those of the person with whom he is conversing, but have a furtive way of casting a swift, penetrating glance, now and then, at the people in whose company he finds himself. He talks very little, but what he says shows that he possesses a cultivated mind. His bearing is that of a gentleman, dignified and quiet. I have found, on further acquaintance, that he has, also, a slow, cat-like tread, which enables him to glide round corners, and steal into a room so gently, that he is near you before you are aware of his presence ; though, at the same time he appears to be plunged in such deep thought, or, so intently studying a book, as not to notice what is going on around him. I have no doubt, however that, indifferent and oblivious as Mr. Viner seems to be, he is too astute a personage to allow anything of importance to really escape his observation.

Have you heard of the mysterious circumstances which are supposed, by my father, and others, to have been mainly conducive in raising Viner to his present position in the family ? I fear that Olive, too, has also fallen under his sway, for which I am quite unable to account ; but that she is in trouble I can see, and if she gives me any clue to the enigma, I will help her out of it, if I can.

When we had finished dinner, we adjourned to a small drawing-room, where Olive enlivened the evening with her charming voice. She sings divinely, and Mr. Viner, who has a passion for music, expressed his satisfaction at finding that your friend could gratify his taste so well. When the music ceased, he joined Sir Harry, who had been walking on the terrace for some time, smoking, and enjoying his own meditations.

Soon afterwards we all retired to rest, but, as you can see, from the length of this letter, I have given up my "beauty sleep" to write you these particulars, feeling sure of your interest, and that your thoughts are often with me.

But now I shall wish you good-night, for I can scarcely keep my eyes open, they are closing slowly, overcome with sleep, and I must to bed.

How is your aunt? Please offer her my sympathy in her present invalid condition, and accept the love of

Your affectionate friend,

MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER II.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court,

June 18th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I have been looking anxiously for a letter from you, and not receiving one fear that your aunt still continues an invalid, and therefore claims so much of your time, that you have none left to bestow upon me. I hope you will soon send me some tidings of you both.

Any little news of the outside world always appears to relieve the monotony of a sick room, therefore I continue my narrative of events at Fairleigh Court, although you will not find it a very lively one. One day is just like another, and yet, there is a certain amount of interest and excitement, connected with the inmates, that engrosses my thoughts, and so prevents dulness.

I spend much of my time in exploring the beauty of the gardens and grounds, and in admiring the many unique and valuable treasures the house contains. I also find this a delightful spot in which to idle away the sunny hours, weaving dreams and building "castles in the air," a pastime to which I am, as you know, very much addicted.

Olive, already, looks a little better and brighter for my society. The weather is lovely, and we sit, under one of the big cedars on the lawn, every morning, and pass the time with books and work. In the afternoon we drive, and explore the country round, which, though familiar to me from my childhood, has always some fresh beauty to be discovered, particularly in the grand old Forest, that skirts this estate. The sunny glades there, and fine old trees, combined with views of the distant hills, would provide us with

many a charming sketch, if Olive, in her present state of health, did not show indifference to her brush. So I humour her present languid fancies, and wait for the revival of her energy and interest.

We see but little of Sir Harry, and can very well dispense with his company, for he is usually morose and gloomy, and I observe that Olive breathes more freely when away from him. Mr. Viner, too, does not often thrust his society upon us, but he haunts Sir Harry like his shadow. They are together morning, noon, and night.

During the many years in which the baronet has been a recluse, he has developed a strong literary taste; though, from the way in which he passed the earlier period of his life, no one would ever have imagined that books, or any kind of study, could provide him with amusement, or recreation. His library is well-furnished with learned volumes, and these, together with lighter works, give him, more than any other occupation could do, that aid to forgetfulness, and pastime for the mind, which such true friends of solitude can alone provide.

His pursuit is shared by Conway Viner, but whether his interest in it is real, or simulated, it would be impossible for me to say. At all events, he is very well-informed on all subjects; but I have conceived a great aversion to the man, and I think it is reciprocated, as such feelings usually are.

Although I have now been here a fortnight, Olive has not yet given me her confidence, or told me the cause of her trouble; but I fancy she is waiting for a favourable opportunity to do so.

I have noticed that Mr. Viner has lately unexpectedly joined us, once or twice, in our walks; and has also come, noiselessly, through the open window of the room where we have been sitting, and, remaining for a little while, on some pretext or other, tried to enter into conversation with us.

I can see that this annoys Olive, but she makes no remark upon his conduct, although she palpably shrinks from him. To my astonishment, too, Mr. Viner has several times paid her marked attentions; quite unnecessary and uncalled-for, from one holding an inferior position in the house. This evening, he actually rallied her upon her abstraction, and disinclination to oblige him by singing a special song, with which he had requested her to favour him.

Poor Olive cast an appealing look at her father, but if Sir

Harry saw it, he made no sign of having done so, and I felt very sorry for my poor friend when I saw the despairing expression that passed over her face.

One of Olive's favourite songs often haunts me. I have copied the words, as I think you will like them :—

Had I but known how soon the sun would fade,
And leave me in the gloaming sad, alone ;
I would have drank more deeply of life's bliss
Before it passed away ;—had I but known !

Had I but known how soon the flowers of joy
Could be by weeds of sorrow overgrown,
I would have stemmed the torrent of my tears
With patience, trust and hope ;—had I but known !

Had I but known that I must bid farewell
To each delight of earth, I would have sown
With greater zeal good seed of kindly deeds ;
I would have wept no more ;—had I but known !

Had I but known that *this* would be the end—
Sad days, and nights from which sweet sleep hath flown,
I would have lingered longer in those hours
Whereon the sunlight shone ;—had I but known !

Had I but known that I must die so soon,
That I must see each cherished hope o'erthrown,
I would have borne the fever and the fret
Of life with greater calm ;—had I but known !

Had I but known that thou wert true to me,
Before the light died out, and strength had flown,
I might have lived for thee, heart of my heart,
I might have been thy bride ;—had I but known

Olive is always solicitous for my comfort, and strives to make everything as pleasant for me here as lies in her power. She has the same consideration for others, and the same loving nature, that made her such a favourite at school, and first won for her my regard and affection, as well as the esteem of many others.

In the library at Fairleigh Court, there hangs a picture of the late Lady Gray, who died, many years ago, of a broken heart, caused, it is said, by her husband's coldness and neglect. She must have been a lovely woman ! Her mournful eyes seem to meet mine with the same pleading look in them that Olive's wore this evening.

The only son and heir of the Grays, dead too, gazes down with the same sad eyes. Truly this is an unhappy family ; and will become extinct, should Olive die single, or, if married, be childless. I wonder what will be her fate !

My father has told me that Sir Harry, in early life, was a very wild young man. His habits were dissipated, and his temper violent. He also drank to excess. These faults were all reproduced in his only son, and you can well imagine the stormy scenes and terrible quarrels that took place between them. Unfortunately, Thornton Gray early developed a taste for gambling, which nothing could quench. As fast as his debts were paid, he contracted others, and though generosity has always been one of Sir Harry's good qualities, yet he naturally drew the line at a certain point, and refused to supply any more funds. In vain the son stormed and raged, his father grew more obstinate with provocation, and a final rupture between them was the result.

Sir Harry banished his son from his home, and forbade him ever to come into his presence again.

Left to himself, the unfortunate young man went abroad, where he spent his time in the company of card sharpers, and gamblers, who soon completed his ruin. In the course of a few years, Thornton Gray fell into bad health, his constitution being impaired by his evil courses and excesses ; and about nine months ago he died, unforgiven by his obdurate father ; who, whatever grief he may have felt when he heard of his son's sad end, never manifested any emotion, or was seen to shed a tear.

I am writing, as usual, in my bedroom, after we have retired for the night. And *what* a bedroom ! Fit setting for any family ghost, with its old-world look and ancient furniture.

It is a good thing I am not troubled with nerves, for what should I do if I were to be seized with a panic ? 'Tis true Olive sleeps close by, but I could not go to her for assistance or encouragement, as it might be dangerous to alarm her in her present weak state, so I must e'en make the best of it should anything eerie or startling occur, and trust to my own vaunted courage, which has never failed me yet, but then, alack ! it has never been tried in any great emergency.

Let me describe this room to you, my friend. It is large, lofty

and oak - panelled, containing a very handsome mantel-piece, also of oak, and elaborately carved. It represents Abraham offering up Isaac, who lies bound upon the altar. The Patriarch is depicted with the knife in his hand, in readiness to slay his son, and the figure of the angel appearing from heaven to stop the sacrifice, is seen in the right-hand corner of this artistic handiwork. The carving is beautifully executed, and brings the trial of Abraham's faith vividly before me.

The large four-post bedstead is also carved with winged dragons, and unknown objects, more curious than beautiful. The bed-hangings, of thick tapestry, were worked by some fair ancestress of Olive's, and are lovely in design. But I fear, in this instance at least, I do not properly reverence antiquity, at all events at the midnight hour, for I infinitely prefer my cheerful room at home, to the cumbrous furniture of this gloomy chamber.

But now I must say farewell. Sleep calls me. *Dieu vous garde.*

Your affectionate friend,
MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER III.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON
Fairleigh Court,
July 9th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I was delighted to receive your kind letter, it quite cheered my spirits; more particularly as it contained favourable news of dear Mrs. Scott's health. It pleases me, also, to hear that you think my letters entertaining.

Olive has, at last, unbosomed herself to me, and I find that the secret of her present unhappiness, and ill-health, is the old, old story, "Love's Young Dream."

"A light that ne'er can shine again
On life's dull stream,"

But more on that subject anon. I think it will be best if I

relate, in sequence, the events which have taken place since I last wrote to you.

The love of order and regularity—inherited from my dear father—makes me a most methodical person, I am told, so to begin.

One day, about a week ago, when we were starting for a drive—of course I mean, Olive and myself—Mr. Viner suddenly appeared at the side of the carriage, and suggested accompanying us. Olive looked chagrined and uneasy, but politely acquiesced.

I must say that, when he chooses, Conway Viner can make himself extremely agreeable. His manners have a fascination, which would prove very pleasant, were they not counteracted by the cold, repellent look of his face. As I have before remarked, he is an educated man, and the hours that are devoted by him and Sir Harry, every day, to reading and research, mainly contribute to the fund of information which they both possess, not only upon the leading topics of the day, but upon art, literature and science generally.

We drove a distance of some miles, to see the ruins of a remarkable old mansion, called the Priory. Centuries ago it was a religious house, but, like many other monasteries in England, was condemned by King Henry VIII. to be abolished. On the site of the old Priory, a handsome residence was built, in which Lord Falkland was born, who met his death on the field of battle at Newbury, fighting for the martyr King. This Sovereign took refuge in the Priory from his enemies during the civil wars.

I delighted in wandering about this lovely and romantic spot. We all sat down by the side of the river which skirts the grounds, and I fell into a reverie over the departed glories of the grand old mansion. Bygone days passed before my mind; those days when noble knights and gentle dames disported themselves in the sunny walks, decked in all their bravery, and laughed, danced and sang in the now silent and deserted chambers.

I pictured a gay Cavalier sauntering side by side with some fair lady, under the shady trees. Or, in the dewy evening, lingering on the cool green turf of the sequestered lawns and shrubberies, to listen—as I was now doing—to the sweet

melody of the birds, and inhale the fresh breeze from the placid river. And while I was thus dreaming, these verses formed themselves in my mind, and I have since given expression to them as follows :—

Oh, river, where the rushes grow
So green and high, so green and high !
Oh, river, flowing silently
'Neath the clear blue summer sky !
Calm, deep river, cool and pleasant,
Give thy freedom unto me,
And thy course so bright and gleaming,
Ever journeying tranquilly.

Here, the willows on thy borders
With their branches bending low,
Stand, like sentinels around thee,
Steadily as ages go.
Green, the meadows round thee, river,
With their flocks of lazy sheep,
And the cowslips, large and yellow,
Deep among the grass that creep.

On thy banks the guelder-roses,
Lilacs and laburnums grow,
Blue forget-me-nots beside thee,
In abundance freely blow.
Lovely wild-flowers in their seasons,
Bloom 'mid medley of sweet song,
And, from out the crackling brushwood,
The scared rabbit scuds along.

Yet upon thy banks far upward
Thou hast other beauties rare,
Fine old ruins of the Priory,
With its chapel, standing there.
Standing with thick woods encircled,
Haunt of blackbird and of thrush,
Decked with ever-changing foliage,
Worthy of true artist's brush.

Through all changes changing never,
River, thou hast seen depart
All the Priory's former glory
Of war, chivalry and art.
Left to Nature's gentle keeping,
To its tender hand alone,
It speaks low, and only asketh
One thought for the days now flown.

For it yieldeth true enjoyments
Still to Nature's lover true,
With its sylvan glades and thickets,
Bounded by the distant view.
And one friend it keepeth ever,
One who ne'er will pass away,
Thee, dear river, true and steady,
Rolling onward night and day.

Mr. Viner pointed out the architectural beauties of the ancient residence, and we greatly admired the dilapidated chapel attached to it. Some parts of this building still remain in good preservation. Over the entrance to it, two angels, carved in stone, gaze down upon the intruder; near to them is a vivid representation of the burning bush, and some lovely rose-windows; all of which, however, will soon be swept away by the ruthless hand of Time, the destroyer. But the *tout ensemble* is a creation that would now delight the soul of any antiquary.

We really spent a most enjoyable afternoon.

When we returned home, Sir Harry called Mr. Viner into his study, where they remained closeted together, until the dinner-bell rang.

Olive led the way to her boudoir, where we had tea, and there, at my request, she related Mr. Viner's history, at least, as far as the details have been made known to her. With regard to the supposed reason of his influence over her father, she seems to be entirely ignorant.

Conway Viner was the son of a farmer in the neighbourhood, who was also one of the baronet's youthful companions, and the sharer in many of his wild freaks and follies. Having dissipated his property—which had been heavily mortgaged by his grandfather some years ago—and becoming disabled, by a fall from his horse, from any active employment, he applied to Sir Harry for assistance in the education of his son.

The baronet responded by placing the boy at a good school. He grew fond of him, and invited him to spend his holidays at the Court. Viner's abilities proving above the average, his patron sent him—still at his own expense—to the University, where he took a fair degree. Sir Harry's original intention was, that the young man should enter the Church, and as he held the presentation to a family living, it would have been easy to provide for him in that way; but, for some unexplained reason,

the idea was given up, and Viner has continued to reside at the Court ever since, as Sir Harry's secretary.

I think you know that Olive was brought up under the care of her aunt, Lady Talbot, and lived with her until her death, which event took place about a year ago. It was at that time Olive came to live here permanently. She had never seen Mr. Viner until recently, neither had she ever been much in the society of her father and brother, which, probably, accounts for her lack of knowledge concerning the past.

Olive asked many questions about you, and said it might be in your power to do her an act of kindness some day. I think she would have explained further, had we not been warned by the lateness of the hour, that dinner would shortly be served. Sir Harry is a perfect martinet in the routine of daily life, and would consider it quite a solecism in good manners to be a few minutes late for dinner.

Olive was in splendid voice this evening. I think our excursion to the Priory the other day, and some lovely drives we have taken since, have acted beneficially upon her spirits. She sang to perfection, and Sir Harry, who is very fond of music, listened intently. Although he often seems apparently untouched and unmoved by his daughter's sweet voice, yet, I think, sometimes it strikes some hidden chords of emotion, and awakens feelings in his passionate nature, that have lain long buried, and are known only to himself.

Music certainly has the power to stir the soul to its depths, as nothing else in this world can do.

I imagine, too, that underneath the surface of Mr. Viner's cold, calculating character, lie hidden fires, that, if once kindled, would not easily be quenched. But he holds himself well in hand, and would never yield one iota to any feelings of sentiment for anyone, were they ever so beloved, if by so doing, he would defraud himself of any gain he was determined to win, whether he played for love, ambition, or worldly advancement.

This letter has already exceeded all my others in length, and I will despatch it to you to-morrow, or I shall be encroaching on your good-nature. I will defer any more news until I write again, for to-night, dear Julia, I am not in my usual high spirits. The gloom of this place begins to affect my nerves I think.

I am oppressed with a nameless foreboding of evil, and feel a longing to be back with my own cheerful family, who have no mysteries, and no secrets to hide.

With fond love, believe me,
Your affectionate friend,
MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER IV.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.
Fairleigh Court,
July 17th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

We have been in much anxiety here, the last few days, about Sir Harry, who seems very unwell.

He and Mr. Viner had a stormy scene in the library, yesterday. We could hear their voices raised in angry dispute, and Olive *wished*, but did not dare, to go and inquire into the cause.

Quarrels have been frequent between them lately, Olive says, and her father has become very irritable and excited during the last few months.

If Sir Harry felt any wish to confide in his daughter, Viner would most certainly frustrate all his attempts to do so, but I do not think, her father would turn to Olive for any comfort or sympathy, under his trouble, whatever it may be; for though originally his disposition was expansive and demonstrative, he has for a long time completely lost all his *bonhomie* and geniality, and developed into the gloomy, morose man he now appears.

He has shut himself up at Fairleigh Court for many years, and never goes anywhere. He visits none of the neighbouring families, neither does he encourage any of their advances. He does not appear to have one old friend left, saving the Vicar; and Viner is the only person who drives or walks with him. *He* is constantly by his side, but whether this is his own arrangement, or Sir Harry's, we know not. At all events, this so-called secretary has some secret hold over the baronet, and uses it to bend him to his will.

I was interrupted just now, by a knock at my door, and on opening it, found Olive standing on the threshold. I bade her welcome, and made her sit down in an arm-chair by the open window ; for the nights are so warm, it is a pleasure to breathe the balmy air, and we retire at such an early hour, even for the country, that I have always time to write, for awhile, before I go to bed.

Olive is rather different from other young girls, in many ways. She has lived long without any young companions, and I suppose that partly accounts for her reserved manner. We have exchanged no nocturnal confidences until recently, but now the ice is broken, she often comes to share my solitude. Everybody knows the relief it gives, to pour out our troubles to sympathising ears ; especially when they have been pent up for many months, as is the case with my friend.

I am not betraying her confidence, in telling you the particulars of her acquaintance with Colonel Bruce, she wishes me to do so ; and as you know the gentleman in question, you will be all the more interested in her story.

It was from Colonel Bruce that Sir Harry Gray first heard of the death of his son and heir. The two young men were, at one time, in the same regiment, viz., the King's Dragoon Guards ; but the debts contracted by Thornton Gray, added to the excess of his dissipated life, so annoyed the baronet—combined with the fear of an old name being disgraced—that he compelled his son to send in his papers and resign his commission.

The sequel to this sad history, I have already told you.

It was Colonel Bruce who discovered the unhappy young man, lying ill at Monte Carlo, where he shortly afterwards died. It was he, who wrote to apprise Sir Harry of the fact ; who attended to the last sad rites ; and also, at his father's request, settled the spendthrift's debts of honour.

On his return to England, Sir Harry invited Colonel Bruce to Fairleigh Court. He remained here for some weeks, and during his stay, Sir Harry roused himself a little from his usual misanthropical state, for though he visibly changed, and became broken in health, after his son's death, yet, as I have before told you, he made no sign of sorrowing for that son's untimely end.

During Colonel Bruce's visit, Olive says, her father looked more at his ease in Viner's presence and apparently shook off

some of the nervous fancies that clouded his mind. He observed with pleasure the attraction Olive possessed for the colonel ; and he even unbent so far as to smile at her several times ; also to examine, with some degree of interest, the sketches she made, and to seek her society now and then.

But when Colonel Bruce desired to win Olive's hand in marriage, and having obtained her consent, spoke to Sir Harry also ; then, a cloud fell over the old man's face again, and he courteously, but firmly made known his decision—that much as he liked and esteemed Colonel Bruce, and greatly as the alliance, under other circumstances, would have pleased him, it could not be—he had other intentions for his daughter.

As Sir Harry continued obstinate and immoveable in this decision, in spite of the colonel's pleading, and Olive's tears, nothing remained to be done, but for the lovers to bow to his will, and part.

And now comes the saddest part of Olive's sad story !

Loving Colonel Bruce with all the strength of a reserved nature, she must yet give him up, and say farewell to all the dawning hopes of happiness that open before her eyes ; or, else incur the displeasure of a father who had never won her love ; and seemed indifferent whether he possessed it, or not. She must sacrifice a woman's fondest dreams, at the stern fiat of a man, whose own life was a mystery to his child, and to everybody around him.

Sir Harry would give no reason for withholding his consent to a marriage, that had in it all the elements of happiness. Suitability of rank, age, and their mutual love, were all alike disregarded ; and what adds to the misery endured by his daughter is the knowledge, that it is to Viner she owes this wretchedness, that it is his hand which pulls the secret springs, and works behind the scenes, for his own aggrandisement, and her undoing.

When Colonel Bruce had been gone a short time, Viner—stating that he had her father's permission to address her—made Olive an offer of marriage, which she coldly and disdainfully declined. Her aversion for Viner is only equalled by her dread of him. She guesses that he holds some shameful secret in the past life of Sir Harry, and trades upon his fears regarding its discovery.

Constant fretting and the solitude of her life, have quite un-

nerved the poor girl ; and, to add to her distress, she can see no way of escape from her painful and embarrassing position.

I console her as well as I can ; but when sorrow seems hopeless, it is so difficult to know what to *say* ; and, in this case, I feel, there is nothing I can *do* either. We must wait with patience the course of events, and seize every chance that offers of disentangling the web that Viner has woven round Sir Harry Gray.

Olive wishes me to say, that, should you see Colonel Bruce, she would esteem it a favour if you would assure him of her unfaltering fidelity. She has no means of communicating with him, as her father extracted a promise from her, that she would not write to him ; and she will not break her word. But she also feels that she owes Colonel Bruce some reparation for his disappointed affection, of which she is the innocent cause ; and the lovers agreed — should any opportunity occur — to assure each other, from time to time, of the unchanged state of their feelings.

Sir Harry's temper is so violent when roused, that every care must be taken not to provoke it. As yet, he has refrained from openly urging Olive to consent to a marriage with Viner ; but she lives in constant dread of his doing so. How dreadful it must be to a daughter to feel, that her father is bent upon her acceptance of a man utterly repugnant to her !

Sir Harry's failing health, too, oppresses Olive's mind ; but he resolutely refuses to allow her to call in any medical man, and will not own that anything ails him.

The old man, has so far condescended to make himself agreeable, as to play a game of billiards with me the last few nights. But, though such a skilful hand, that victory should be easy to him, I can see his thoughts are far away, and I often win the game through his abstraction and utter indifference to it.

Olive is most anxious that you should write quickly after the receipt of this letter, as she longs for tidings of Colonel Bruce, and thinks it likely that he may now be at Dover, where his mother and sister have taken a house for the summer. He expected to visit them there this month.

I am afraid I have been remiss in my inquiries after your aunt. Accept my apologies for my fault, my dear Julia, and forgive me. Also believe me, when I say that I have not for-

gotten you for one single day, although other people, and many things, occupy a large share of my thoughts just now.

I long to see your handwriting again, and to hear that the sight of mine still gives you pleasure.

With much love, believe me,

Your affectionate friend,

MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER V.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court,

July 25th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

I am delighted to find that your aunt has sufficiently recovered from her illness to be able to go for a drive ; and I must congratulate you on your good nursing powers.

The weather continues lovely. We have not had one wet day since I came here. It wants but one thing to make life delightful in this beautiful place, and that is the society of one's fellow-creatures ; but on this point, Sir Harry's opinion would be at variance with mine. He does not improve in health, but Olive is certainly better and more cheerful than she was.

I have been deputed by my friend to visit some of the poor people in the village, as, since her health failed, she shrinks from going among them. I am much amused at their dread of the baronet, and yet, their curiosity is insatiable about him. He goes by the name of "Old Harry" among the cottagers, and truly, in many ways, he is a good representative of that mysterious personage.

The Vicar and his wife are great friends of mine, and devoted to Olive. Mr. Fenn carries out in his daily life my idea of what a clergyman ought to be, more nearly than any of that class I ever met. There is about his whole bearing a palpable something, not easy to be explained, which gives the impression that his standard of thought and action are high and unworldly. His face wears a calm, quiet look, that tells of inward peace ; and his gentle, sympathetic manners win confidence and love, alike from

rich and poor. Even Sir Harry seems softened when in his company, and manifests the greatest respect for his opinions and character; and, although he never enters the church, he always has a kindly welcome for the Vicar when he comes to the Court.

Mrs. Fenn is just the wife such a good man ought to have—motherly, kind and active. They both carry their years well, and show few signs of age; but I should judge them to be past sixty.

I have made several allusions in my letters to the influence Mr. Viner has exerted over Sir Harry Gray for so many years. I think it will amuse you if I now relate the popular idea of the way in which he is supposed to have obtained a hold over his patron. Some portions of the tale were told me by my father, and others I have gathered from Mrs. Fenn.

The episode to which I refer happened about fifteen years ago, and created a great sensation at the time; and it seems to have lost none of its interest, at the present day, to those who live in this neighbourhood and know Sir Harry.

If the memory of a man's good deeds soon dies away, you may be sure the world never forgets to repeat and circulate any *faux pas* which he may have unfortunately made.

The stigma of disgrace must cling to one who forfeited in early life the respect of his fellow-men; who never controlled his temper, or exercised any habits of self-restraint, but let loose the reins of passion, and gave way to every selfish appetite. Such is a true picture of the past life of Sir Harry Gray!

Nothing remains in his conduct to remind people of his former condition, excepting a violent temper, which can never bear to be thwarted; yet, no one can suppose for a moment, that a man of his birth and position, would, without some adequate reason, suddenly give up all friends, society, and interests in life—worthless though they may have been—and checking his intemperance, seclude himself from the world; unless some overwhelming catastrophe had happened to him, which changed the whole current of his thoughts, and completely altered his mode of living.

Although in the lifetime of the late Lady Gray, her husband had never appeared to show her any affection, but treated her with great coldness and neglect, yet, after her death, he gave

way still more to every kind of excess ; and not satisfied with leading a wild, gay life away from home, brought to the Court many undesirable and dissipated companions. The habit of drinking to excess, which had gained a great hold over him, now became confirmed, and if he could not indulge it with his boon companions, he would call in a footman, to whom he showed great marks of favour, and wile away the hours in his company.

Just at the time when things were at their worst, Conway Viner came to the Court for the long vacation. To his credit, be it said, that he never joined in any of the baronet's orgies. His conduct has always been irreproachable. Neither his temperament, nor inclinations tempt him to scenes of debauchery. It is said, that he frequently ventured to remonstrate with Sir Harry on the scandal he was causing in the village and the neighbourhood by his doings ; but he only drew upon himself the baronet's displeasure, without in any way checking his riotous proceedings.

Sir Harry's reformation dates from the time that the following incident took place.

One morning this quiet little village was startled by the news, that Sir Harry Gray's favourite footman had fallen downstairs over night, and killed himself, by striking his head against the iron balusters, in his descent. The information proved to be true.

At the inquest, which was held a day or two afterwards, the following details were related by Viner :

He stated, of course, upon his oath, that on the evening in question, the baronet had been drinking heavily, and became unmanageable. He, therefore, after vainly trying to get him to bed, turned to the footman, who was in his master's room, for assistance. The man was, himself, far from sober ; and Viner's story was that on reaching the top of the stairs, he overbalanced himself, and, failing to recover his footing, fell headlong to the bottom, where he lay like a log, silent and immovable.

After dragging Sir Harry to his room, and depositing him in an arm-chair, Viner rushed downstairs, and raised the prostrate man. He loosened his neckcloth, and, laying his ear to his heart, listened for its pulsations, and waited for some sound to give him assurance that he yet breathed. But no ; all was still ! Death had been instantaneous.

Viner told the jurymen that he stood paralysed with the shock. Silence reigned in the house. All the servants had long

since retired to rest. Their quarters were far off, in the other wing of the mansion, and were reached by a separate staircase. He ran to awaken the butler, and told him to despatch a groom with all speed to Slocombe to fetch Dr. Rugby, and the house was soon astir with frightened servants.

Viner gave orders for the dead man to be taken into an adjoining chamber, and after locking the door, he returned to Sir Harry, whom he found sunk in a deep slumber.

From the hour that the baronet heard the dreadful tidings, he became an altered man. Nothing stronger than water has ever since passed his lips.

There were grave doubts felt, and expressed, at the time, as to the truth of the story told by Viner; but, as he was the only witness of the accident, saving Sir Harry, whose evidence was valueless, no further action could be taken in the matter.

The man's friends were consoled for his death, by a handsome sum of money given to them by his master; and though the event formed, for a long while, the principal topic of conversation in the village, and surrounding district, yet, in time, like everything else, the interest concerning it; made greater by the partial mystery in which it was enveloped—faded away; and nothing remained to show, that anything out of the ordinary course of events had taken place, excepting the changed relations between the baronet and Mr. Viner.

Great as had always been the influence of the secretary over Sir Harry, especially since the death of his son, it now seemed to be complete. He was never seen abroad without Viner; who, from this time, took up his residence, permanently at Fairleigh Court, and became the adviser, friend, and intimate companion of its owner.

If Sir Harry resented Viner's espionage, he manifested no desire to break away from it. His nerves were shattered, and his health broken, and he clung to his prop, as the ivy to the oak, hoping for safety and protection from danger, whatever might happen; though he had sold his peace of mind, and his liberty, to a man whom he knew could have no sense of honour, and against whose machinations he was powerless to struggle.

It is thought by every one, that the true story of that dreadful night, is, that the footman did assist Sir Harry to bed, and was in a state of intoxication, as stated by Viner. It is supposed that

the baronet, who freely indulged in abuse towards his dependents when in his cups, swore at the man, who replied by angry words; and that Sir Harry, maddened by drink, raised his hand, and struck the fatal blow, which caused the poor fellow to lose his balance, and sent him into eternity.

The doctor's opinion threw no light upon the matter, and the verdict at the inquest was, that Graves met his death by a fall downstairs.

There is no doubt that Viner saw a way to profit by the sad event. He knew that Sir Harry and himself were the only witnesses of the accident; and he evidently took the resolution to trade upon this knowledge for his own advancement. But whether the thought flashed through his mind as he stood silently gazing down upon the dead man, or, whether it was evolved some hours later, only Viner, himself, can say. The price of his silence, if Sir Harry was guilty, can be guessed by his subsequent behaviour. But if the baronet is willing to sacrifice his child to this arch-villain, we know he would stick at nothing to soothe and conciliate the man, into whose unscrupulous hands he has unfortunately fallen.

Viner is playing for a high stake, and means to win it, if he can. But the issue of events is in higher hands than his, and I confidently believe that he will yet be exposed, though in what way, of course I know not.

This letter, dear friend, has become voluminous, and not another word will I add to it, but that I am,

Yours lovingly, as ever,

MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

(To be concluded.)

BELGRAVIA.

DECEMBER, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By MRS. ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"THROUGH DEEP WATERS."

THE shock to May was profound. The knowledge of his approaching marriage, the consciousness of the wide gulf which his new ties would open between him and herself, was as nothing to the blow Ogilvie's hand had dealt. What opinion could he have formed of *her*, that he should have expected her co-operation in such a scheme? Had his moral sense been blunted? How was it that a man who seemed the soul of honour, could meditate the deliberate robbery of a woman who was about to give him herself, her love, her fortune? May could never have anticipated the bitterness of such disenchantment! She had yet to learn that many men—successful and highly honourable men—have one code to regulate their dealings with their fellows, and another for their intercourse with what used to be considered the weaker sex; none who know the world, will question this. Is it to be attributed to the fact, that most men, however their reason and higher convictions may disapprove, are ingrained polygamists? Who can tell? There can, however, be no doubt that some of the cruellest wrongs, the keenest agonies, arise from the conflict between the laws which are essential for the

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welfare of Society, the improvement of the human race, and the tremendous force of natural instincts. Whoever, through daring or weakness, ventures to break the all-important code that develops from "our duty to our neighbour," let him or her be prepared to accept the penalty. Such considerations did not present themselves to May. Nor was she selfish in her misery, she thought of her faithful if somewhat priggish friend! Surrounded as she had been from babyhood, with devoted affection, how would she endure the polished hardness which was Ogilvie's ordinary shield and spear, in dealing with his fellow creatures? He did not love Frances, and how could he disguise his want of affection? She (May) knew what Ogilvie was unmasked. It was this contrast, this discovery of a moral Gulf Stream, which traversed with its warm current the colder ocean of his surface nature, that lent so subtle a charm to her friendship with him! How would it be with Frances? For herself she could not fancy a more torturing existence than that of Ogilvie's unloved wife. She knew him well; since the scene she had just gone through, a new and fierce light had brought out with terrible distinctness the coarser grain, the seams and flaws of his character, all of which were welded together and smoothed down by his strong will. But she must not think! Her first duty to herself was to present an unbroken front, to allow no faltering, to direct suspicion to the coming marriage as the source of mental or physical suffering.

It was a bitter experience the first waking moment from the heavy sleep, which, after a night of wakeful battling with herself, she fell into, considerably after dawn. But with the sense of wretchedness came the strength to resist—and she rose, thinking of how she should busy herself during the day. Certainly she should arrange her belongings and pack them up, as she did not doubt that Miss Barton would accept her offer of a visit. She contrived to occupy herself fully, and got through the morning and afternoon better than she hoped.

Miss Macallan was reading a letter with a discomfited air, when May came down to breakfast the next day. She immediately put it aside and proceeded to read the usual portion of Scripture.

When the servants had retired, and she had given May her tea, she took up her letter again.

"Didn't you tell me," she said in a severe tone, "that my cousin Ogilvie was quite agreeable to your going away for a bit, and approved of me letting my house?"

"He did not seem to have any objection to my visiting Miss Barton, but I don't think I said anything about the house."

"Well, it's my impression you did; any way, here Mr. Ogilvie writes as if I was a—a mere beggar that depended on his bounty! because I ventured to accept a good tenant without asking his leave! I'll have him to know I am not beholden to him for anything! If he did mix himself up in my affairs, it was on his own account."

May looked at her in astonishment, her tone towards her revered relative being generally most deferential.

"I am sorry he has written in such a strain!" she said.

"But here's what has just taken my breath away," continued Euphemia, and she read, "I think it right to inform you that I am engaged to Miss Conroy, and hope to be married before August—this will necessarily make some change in my plans." "Did you know this?" with a piercing glance.

"Yes, Mr. Ogilvie told me the other day."

"And why did you not tell me?"

"I thought Mr. Ogilvie wished to tell you himself."

"Well, it all passes my comprehension, and upsets all my ideas. And are you going to stay on with me?"

"Not if you do not want me, Miss Macallan," said May, a good deal startled by the question. "I do not see how Mr. Ogilvie's marriage can affect my remaining with you, if you require my services."

"Your services!" burst out Miss Macallan fiercely, and then drew in suddenly. "Well, I really cannot tell; you are a nice-like girlie, and handy, but I cannot, just at the present, say what I may want—we'll leave that open, and—tell me, you have no law plea going on, hey? no money coming to you?"

"Certainly not!" said May smiling. "I have nothing in the world but what I have saved from the salary you give me. What put such an idea into your head, Miss Macallan? I am sure Mr. Ogilvie never told you anything of the kind."

"I can't say he did, still he put it into my mind."

"I haven't yet had a reply from Miss Barton, but I think she will take me in."

"Well, the curious turns of this life are what none of us can anticipate, and put very curious thoughts into my head! I'll write to my cousin, but not to-day. It's wiser to cool down before taking the pen in my hand," and Miss Macallan rose from the table, put her letter into a big solid desk that stood on a dinner waggon, and departed with her key basket.

May took up the paper and waited for the second post, as she was beginning to feel anxious for some communication from Miss Barton.

She was not disappointed. At ten o'clock came the expected letter; it was concise but to the point.

"DEAR MAY,—Delighted at the idea of having you. Am just starting for our old holiday ground, 'Le Moulin.' If you can come on Saturday, let me know when your train arrives at Rouen, and I shall meet you there. Send a line by return—all news when we meet.

"Ever yours,
"S. BARTON."

Saturday! and this was Thursday morning. She could do it easily! Letter in hand, she pursued Miss Macallan into the remote recesses of the basement, where she was taking stock of the coals.

"Eh," she said, coming into the kitchen and putting on her spectacles, "that 'ill do fine, and you'll write me whether you'd like to come back or no?"

"Certainly," returned May, who felt in some unaccountable way that once away her connection with Miss Macallan would be for ever severed. She went away to make her preparations for removing all that belonged to her. Whatever Miss Macallan's wishes might be, May made up her mind never to return.

The afternoon brought her an affectionate note from Frances Conroy, announcing her engagement, and adding, "I assure you, dear May, one of Mr. Ogilvie's strongest merits in my eyes is his consistent kindness to you, which proves that his interest in myself has been of long standing." She then proceeded to enlarge on the sensitive pride of her *fiancé* which had long held him back from avowing his attachment, as he hesitated to ask an heiress like herself to share his humbler fortunes. The

marriage would not take place immediately, as there was much to arrange, but Mr. Conroy was anxious that his future son-in-law should be made known to the neighbours and tenantry, as he hoped that at the next election he should stand for the county. All through this epistle, May could read the underlying tone of tenderness, joy, pride, and her heart sickened at the picture of intended treachery stamped upon her memory. Her only hope for Frances lay in the fact that her powers of observation were neither quick nor keen. If Ogilvie chose to take the trouble, he could easily blind her to the true state of affairs.

May was thankful that Frances had not invited her to the Chase. She penned an affectionate reply, which she posted on her way to the train. Miss Macallan, to her surprise, appeared in her bonnet and cloak.

"I am thinking," she said, "as two cost no more than one, I just thought I'd go with you to the station."

"Thank you," said May gratefully. "It is very kind of you."

"You have conducted yourself very well in my house, and I wish to show my approbation. I'll be glad to hear of your well-doing. And I am more pleased than I can well say, that you have respectable friends to go to."

May could only repeat her thanks for Miss Macallan's kind interest, with a sort of passing wonder why she should be so especially grateful for the respectability of May's friends. It was rather comforting on the whole to have some one to see her off, and she had never felt so friendly to the unusually gracious Euphemia as when she waved adieu to her from the carriage window as they slowly moved off.

* * * * *

It was wonderfully soothing to be once more with Miss Barton in their quaint old quarters at the "Moulin des Bois." It was little over a year since May found a refuge there after the shock of her father's death. What a wonderful experience she had had during that brief space of time!—she seemed, even to herself, to have developed from a crude, half-educated, half-fledged creature, abashed by the sense of her own insignificance, into womanhood, and a certain feeling of power. If only she could blot out the memory of Ogilvie's strange outburst—his extraordinary display of passion and treachery! The

bitterness of that moment was perpetually with her, and the effort to seem unchanged was weary work. After some reflection she wrote to Ogilvie, telling him of her kind reception by Miss Barton, and her wish to remain where she was for some time. It would not be well to break off her communications with her guardian the moment he was about to be married. He replied in a suitable and guarded strain, expressed a hope that she would often visit Frances and himself, and assured her she would always be welcome in their house. Madame Falk also wrote, expressing her pleasure that Miss Barton had the comfort of May's company.

It was a little difficult to find enough to do at the Mill, and May's resource, her only refuge from thought, was occupation.

Miss Barton almost wondered at her feverish activity.

"My dear," she said, "you are as hard to satisfy with work as his Satanic Majesty in the old legends, where he is represented making a bargain with some wretched mortal, who is to keep him employed. Only I can't imagine you playing the Devil's part. I wish I had brought down all my old garments, you would have renovated them splendidly. Did I tell you that Esther has given me a lovely velvet dress? I have not worn it yet, and I shall not know myself in it."

May confessed her ignorance of this event. A lively description of the beauty and costliness of the garment ensued. Miss Barton was a great pedestrian, and rather an amusing companion. She had seen a great deal of the world, and was a shrewd observer so far as her "ken" could penetrate; nor was she very merciful in her judgments; arguments, therefore, frequently arose between her and her young companion, which, as usual, ended by leaving each of her own opinion; still May was deeply grateful to her for the useful friction of her society. It took her away from the morbid indulgence of her passionate regrets, which so sorely tempted her. But the length of the excursions on foot, which were nothing to Miss Barton's wiry strength, tried May terribly. Her nerves had been sorely strained, and the conflict constantly going on in her heart between the desperate longing for a sight of Ogilvie, who for more than a year had accustomed her to look to him for all the brightness and happiness her life had ever known, and her determined

effort to put him out of her mind, had made her feverish and unable to eat.

"You had better stay where you are," said Miss Barton, one beautiful evening, as she came into the low, quaintly-shaped sitting-room, whose angles and corners were the result of two rooms thrown into one, and she looked keenly at May as she spoke. "You are looking a very miserable object, and you've been looking worse since you came here—how long ago?"

"Nearly three weeks."

"Well, this fine air ought to have set you up. What's the matter? Can't you recover from the iron rule of Miss Macallan?"

"Do believe me, that Miss Macallan was not in the least unkind. Probably a long stay in London did not suit me, but I will keep at home this evening, for I feel as if I could not walk."

"I'll go into Rouen to-morrow, and get you a tonic," said Miss Barton, with prompt decision. "But the evening is too heavenly to stay indoors. Here, I'll put this easy-chair in the window. You can see the sunset quite well there. It will be glorious. I'll just go up to the old chapel."

With brusque kindness Miss Barton settled May, gave her a book, and went briskly away. May tried to read, but soon wandered from the page before her, and let the volume drop in her lap. How long she had sat thus lost in memory and thought she did not know, but she was roused by the sound of horses' feet and wheels. A startling sound at that hour at the "Moulin des Bois," when all the farm work was over for the day, and the delicious restful evening time reigned over field and wood. Then, the sound of quick steps approaching, the door opened, and Carr walked in, smiling, brown, the picture of healthy life—enough to scare the demons of dejection and useless regret.

"Mr. Carr!" cried May, starting up. "I am so glad to see you. Where have you come from?"

"From London last," he returned, shaking hands with her cordially. "You see, my mother was anxious to get her promised visit to the Conroys over before the house was filled for this wedding, so we went straight through from Milan to London. I saw her off, yesterday, for the Chase—crossed last night, and here I am."

"Miss Barton will be so glad. Have you dined?"

"Yes, I stayed at Rouen to look about me and dine. My mother, who, by the way, is a splendid traveller, was anxious to have a report of you both; and I want to consult with you on one or two matters—with Aunt Sally and you, too."

"Aunt Sally!" repeated May. "Do you dare to apply such a familiar term to the severe Miss Barton?"

"Pooh! Her severity is only skin deep. You see, 'Miss Barton' is too formal for such near relations as we are; and 'Sarah' is too familiar for a woman of her years, so we have hit on the happy medium."

"Will you have tea or coffee, Mr. Carr?"

"I can never resist tea, it's our mainstay at home. Here it seems, it is not considered quite healthy. Ah! those who doubt it ought to know what it is to a thirsty traveller—a hard-riding stockman. But how goes it with yourself, Miss Riddell; you don't look robust?"

"Oh, I am right enough! I have felt the heat a good deal, and I believe walked a little too much with your 'Aunt Sally.'"

"She would knock up a dozen like you!" Looking at her with kindly interest as she proceeded to ring a hand-bell outside the door, which was answered by Adrienne, who expressed her joy at seeing "Monsieur."

While she went to fetch the kettle, May proceeded to set forth the tea-things, which stood in a fine old carved oak cupboard.

"Here, Miss Riddell, don't trouble and tire yourself. I can do that. I'm a regular dab at tea making, and—I don't like to see you look so faint and white. I shall not let Aunt Sally wear you out with these long marches while I am here."

"Are you going to stay?"

"Yes, for a little bit. Then I may run up to Paris, and return to fetch my mother. *She* is looking first-rate, I can tell you—quite too young to have a big son like me. They all want me to go the wedding," he went on, reaching up to a great china tea-pot on the top shelf, and keeping his back to May. "Frances Conroy's, you know; but I don't fancy going."

"Why?" asked May, quite steadily, in her usual voice. "They will make an interesting couple."

"Not to my mind. There isn't nature enough about either of

them," cried Carr, turning round and putting his teapot down with something of a bang.

"Thank you, Mr. Carr," said May laughing; "but that is far too large for two people. That is a representative teapot, and belongs to the house. Pray put it back."

"All right," returned Carr. "No; I don't care about the wedding. Ogilvie is such a cool hand; he is marrying for money, of course, and—well, I never liked him—nor he me."

"How can you possibly tell? If, as you confess, you do not like him, you cannot judge him fairly."

"Why not, Miss Riddell? I do not fancy I am unjust."

"You may be, without knowing it."

"At any rate, I don't like to see any girl married for her money. *You* cannot believe Ogilvie is in love with her?"

"How should I know? Some men never are in love, and Mr. Ogilvie looks like that kind of man."

"Then they are curiously-constructed animals," said Carr, taking his place at the table, as Adrienne brought in the kettle and a plate of delicate "tartines," with another of watercress. "A man who does not fall in love is an inhuman monster. I have always been in love with someone, except when there was no one to fall in love with. At present I am in love with my mother." And he laughed frankly.

"The best love of all," said May, with a low sigh. "Of one thing I am quite sure, Mr. Ogilvie will always be nice and considerate to his wife. He is too well-bred——"

"Nice and considerate!" interrupted Carr. "That's not my idea of a husband. I should want a little more 'fire and tow' than that if I were a girl. And, now tell me—if I am not taking a liberty in asking—have you parted company with your friend Meg Merrilies, in Granby Road?"

"Yes. She did not want me much, and——" she paused.

"I should think she did not!" emphatically; and May was a little struck with his tone, and the slight knitting of his brow. "I never saw a woman who gave me so much the idea of greed. She would sell her soul for gain."

"Perhaps so, if she had one to sell."

"True," said Carr, smiling.

"At all events, we parted friends, and have since bidden each other a final farewell by letter."

"That's right. Now I earnestly hope you will stay with my mother, at any rate while she is in France. You suit her well, you understand her, and she is deucedly fond of you; I know she is. Another cup, please."

May gave it to him with a friendly smile. There was an indescribable atmosphere of healthy, joyous life about Carr, which was quite contagious, and acted like an invigorating sea breeze. May yielded to the influence, and for awhile forgot the present. Soon Carr was describing his own and his mother's journey through Switzerland to the Italian lakes.

"I wish you had been with us, Miss Riddell," he concluded. "You would have been enchanted. But I am sure my mother will go again, and then she will take you with her. By the way, you speak French like a native. Do you think you could get the natives here to give me a room? I want to stay a few days, and it is a long way to come to and fro to Rouen every day."

"That will be very nice," said May pleasantly. "In Miss Barton's absence I will ask Adrienne to arrange matters." So Adrienne was called, and given *carte blanche* in the transaction.

Before Adrienne returned Miss Barton came in from her walk and was equally delighted and astonished to find Carr, gazing with May at the sunset glories, as the life-giving orb sank behind the range of low hills, which hemmed in the valleys to the west, touching the tops of the poplars with gold, and sending a parting gleam to quiver on the mill-stream.

Before the explanation of his appearance was completed Adrienne came to announce volubly that Madame "La propriétaire" had a "chambre," but a chamber of a luxurious description, which she would permit monsieur to occupy for the infinitesimal charge of twenty francs a week.

"Twenty francs a week," repeated Miss Barton. "Fiddle-de-dee. Twelve would be about the mark. And Bernard, if you do come here, what on earth will you do with that grand gentleman's gentleman of yours?"

"You don't suppose I am going to be bothered with *him*, Aunt Sally? He is useful as a travelling-servant; but I began the use of such fine things as valets too late in life, not to find them more in the way than of use, so I have sent him on to Paris to wait for me till I want him. Can't we get some kind of shandry-

dan to drive about in? I fancy you have been walking Miss Riddell to death."

"My dear Bernard, what an exaggeration. Why, May could walk me down any day. She looks pale chiefly because she does not walk enough."

"Well, Aunt Sally, we'll see what driving will do to bring back her roses—not that she ever had many," with a kindly glance at her; "or rather hers were the roses of York."

"Come," said Miss Barton, "let us look at this room they offer you, and see if it is fit to occupy."

* * * * *

This was the beginning of better times. Carr proved a pleasant companion, his simple tastes and sound common-sense made him easily satisfied in the matter of entertainment. He managed to find a conveyance and horse that he could hire—as rich, energetic men generally do succeed in finding whatever they want—and one of the miller's sons was well pleased to act groom for a consideration. Thus equipped, they went far afield, and saw a great deal of the country; and though May's roses were slow in returning, she began to look brighter and more like what she was during her brief visit to Paris. Miss Barton sometimes wondered at Carr's perfect contentment with so placid and monotonous a life. He talked of going up to Paris, but he was in no hurry to go, and made himself as agreeable and useful as he possibly could, even reading aloud to his companions occasionally, when a wet evening kept them in the house.

"I wish," he said to May one day after luncheon, when they happened to be alone together, "I wish you would call me Bernard."

"It does not seem natural to call you anything but Mr. Carr."

"Well, I wish you would; you see I cannot call *you* by your Christian name, if you will not use mine. It would be presumptuous, and it comes to my lips much more readily than Miss Riddell. I always think of you as May."

"Oh, call me May if you like; as dear Madame Falk's son you can call me anything you choose."

"And, as Madame Falk's adopted daughter, you ought to call me Bernard!"

"Very well, I will when I think of it."

"Thank you. Well, then May (it's an awfully nice name)——"

"It is not bad while I am quite young, but it will sound rather silly when I am forty or fifty."

"Not it. But I was going to say, I want to take your advice about a matter of some importance, at least, to me."

"I am sure it is quite at your service, though I don't suppose it will be of much value. You have had far more experience than I have, and know more."

"I am going to say what many would think rude. Somehow, you seem to me as old, or nearly as old, as myself. Here, let me hold that for you." "That" was a skein of silk, which she was trying to wind by passing it round a chair-back.

"Thank you," said May, removing it to his outstretched, exceedingly brown, strong hands. "I think, on the whole you seem younger to me than myself."

"Come, that is not very complimentary either. Why, there must be ten years between us; but never mind that. Will you come with me to the council chamber—that opening in the woods up above there, where we get a glimpse of Rouen? There's a log or two we can sit on, and I don't want Aunt Sally; she is talking of going into the town to-day."

"Very well," returned May, winding diligently. "I feel quite eager to know what the 'matter' is."

"Are you coming to Rouen with me, May?" asked Miss Barton, returning.

"No!" exclaimed Carr, "she is coming with me. I want to talk to her about one or two things—we will tell you all about it after."

"Very well, but who is to drive me?" said Miss Barton, while she inwardly ejaculated:

"Good Lord! is he going to propose for her? He never seems a bit like a lover."

"I'll tell Victor to go, will that do, Aunt Sally?"

Half-an-hour afterwards, May and her client had mounted to the point of view Carr had chosen for a council chamber. She seated herself on the trunk of a prostrate tree:

"Now, Mr. Carr—I mean Bernard—go on."

"You are not tired, are you?"

"Not at all; I am quite prepared to lend you my ears and my brains."

"It is quite heavenly here," said Carr, with a sigh of content.

May did not answer, and he resumed :

"You see, I had quite made up my mind to carry the mother back to Australia with me, and put her at the head of my house. I fancied *she* would like it because *I* did, and she did not like to say no—at any rate at first—now I have been so much more with her, and come to know her well, I have perceived some difficulties. First, though I think she is fond of me, and as sweet and kind as a woman can be, she doesn't love me as she would a son that had grown up with her. It used to make me rather miserable, but the more I think of her, the more I see that it is my misfortune, not her fault. I always wished for a mother, and was ready to jump at such a one as mine. Now, nothing could bring back to her the child she had lost in its babyhood," he sighed. "This is but natural, so I never could make up to her in a new country what she leaves behind. The social life, the companionship of Aunt Sally—who is a good soul, but whose company does not give me the keenest pleasure. Now you know my mother well. How say you, would it not be truer kindness to establish her comfortably in Paris, and come over to see her sometimes, than to drag her across the wide ocean to a land of strangers? Aunt Sally won't commit herself to any opinion; she says she is not disinterested enough, but you—you will give me a sound opinion?"

"I think I can," said May gravely, "though I am not disinterested. My advice is: leave your mother in Paris, she will be happier; and of course you will marry, then she must give way to your wife. It is better to leave her in the home she is accustomed to."

"I believe you are right, May," said Carr, after a short pause. "She has had a cruel life of it! and I too am a sufferer, for we have been robbed of each other! but Australia must be my home. The land made me, and I owe a duty to it which I will try to pay."

He was silent for a minute, and then broke out with sudden cheerfulness :

"I tell you what we will do; she will be three or four weeks longer in England, we'll go up to Paris the day after to-morrow and choose a nice apartment for her, furnish it as she would like—you and Aunt Sally can manage that—move all her favourite traps from the Rue de Vielle Cour, and when she arrives, drive

her straight to her new home. If I offer it to her she may refuse, so we will give her no choice, eh?"

"I think it is a lovely plan, Bernard, and you are a good, generous-hearted fellow to think of it," cried May, turning her moist eyes to his.

"Your hand on it, May. We'll have a jolly room for you," he added, holding it firmly for a moment, "for you must stay with my mother till some lucky fellow persuades you to marry him!"

"Or she turns me out," said May, laughing.

"I am not afraid of that."

They rose and began to walk on slowly and in silence, till Carr asked:

"Has Ogilvie resigned his guardianship?"

"The guardianship has resigned him, I am of age."

"Ah! indeed. I suppose you and Aunt S. couldn't manage to go to Paris to-morrow?"

"No, indeed! What fiery haste you are in."

CHAPTER XXVII.

"SETTING UP HOUSE."

IF Ogilvie's avowal had chilled May's heart with cruel disappointment, and dulled her spirit by the far-reaching doubt his conduct threw over every one and every thing, he had by no means escaped his share of suffering.

He was desperately mortified; he had never had such a check before. Women had never attracted him very much, even as playthings, though he had had a fair share of experience in their ways and weaknesses, but his feelings for May were not unworthy the name of love. He enjoyed her companionship almost as much as he was stirred and melted by the delicate charm of her distinct personality. He had indulged in the rare delight of being her most trusted friend, of slowly, surely winning her, until it was intolerable to give her up. And he thought he had established his influence over her so entirely that he never dreamed she could part with him.

That she was not a mere echo, he was well aware, but that she

should differ with him on this point—a point so vital to them both—was what he could not anticipate.

It must be admitted, that his strongest sensation was anger—contemptuous anger, as he recalled her words, her strong emotion during their last interview. For what a mere phantom she had robbed him (and herself) of what had been the deepest joy of his life—a joy that would have cost her nothing—at least, probably nothing! She had condemned him to the unrelieved hardness of a mere official ambitious existence, rendered still more stony by the presence in his dwelling (not home) of a wife who bored him, and whatever his doubts that the platonic affection he professed for her might not one day incarnate itself into a more human passion, no anticipation of such a development ever crossed *her* mind, he was sure of that. And for an over-strained, high-flown scruple about disloyalty to Frances, she tore herself from him, and crushed the fair edifice of future happiness he had so carefully constructed, under her feet. The strength of principle which inspired May, the resolution with which she had sacrificed herself to it, excited no admiration nor sense of his own inferiority in Ogilvie. She was, he decided, both weak and strong in the wrong directions, and she had thus destroyed his hopes. In all these reflections, the one remedy for the present hopeless condition of things never suggested itself. He never put the question: “Why did I not give up some of my ambition, and link my life with this sweet woman, whose presence is like a strain of harmony, whose sympathy is like rain upon a thirsty land—to my rather arid soul?” Marriage, however, might have tarnished all this sentiment, and the rust of legality eaten away the links which united their spirits.

The receipt of May's letter embittered him still more. She was evidently quite unshaken in her intentions, and he felt that there was nothing for it but to let her go. It was no wonder therefore that his expression was somewhat forbidding—or what she called “dour”—when he called on Miss Macallum about a fortnight after May had left her.

He bid his kinswoman an icy “Good morning,” when she rose from her everlasting accounts to meet him, and begged him to sit down, with the deference she always showed her successful relative.

"Thank you—I have not many minutes to stay. So you and Miss Riddell have parted! Pray, what did you do to scare her away?"

"Eh, cousin Ogilvie, I never scared her. I was very sorry to let her go, for every reason; but hoping to let my house——"

"Which you do not seem to have done," he interrupted.

"No, after no end o' 'havers' the negotiation fell through. The Glasgow body was very close-fisted, not to say mean, and just haggled over an additional guinea a week."

"So you lost the substance for the shadow," put in Ogilvie, "but that's your own affair. About Miss Riddell?"

"Don't you think we didn't part in kindness! I went with her to the station, and we both thought she would come back, but those greedy French people she is so fond of, have got hold of her, and no doubt will be glad of the bit siller you——"

"You will oblige me, by never naming this subject even to myself," broke in Ogilvie with sudden severity. "If you do, depend on me—you will regret it! Have I your promise? I know you are no blab."

"You only do me justice, cousin. I promise you faithfully."

"Then tell me what I am in your debt, and let me finish this matter; I do not want to exchange any letters on the subject. I believe I have sent you three or four. Have you kept them?"

"Well, yes—I rarely destroy a business letter."

"I am glad you did; pray be so good as to give them to me. I know exactly what I have written. I mean no incivility, Euphemia, but I mean to guard against mistakes."

"Eh, well, maybe you're right; make all safe if you're going to be married," returned Euphemia, with a sidelong malicious glance that irritated her interlocutor almost beyond endurance.

"What do you mean?" he asked, flashing a look of fiery wrath at her, well calculated to rout an ordinary spinster, but Euphemia had a strong Scotch backbone.

"Indeed, cousin, that's the very question I've been waiting to ask yourself, for now you're going to wed, and I find the poor bit lassie has nothing of her own, your remarkable liberality has just puzzled me."

Ogilvie gazed at her for an instant, as if he would have liked to silence her for ever.

"Pray be so good as to give me my letters," he reiterated icily.

"Certainly." She very deliberately took a large bunch of keys from her key basket, chose one, crossed the room to a solid-looking bureau, opened it, opened one or two small drawers and produced a small parcel of letters and a slip of paper.

"There," she said handing the letters to him, "that's all I ever had."

Ogilvie looked over them with some care.

"Yes," he returned, "they are all right," and he glanced at the fireplace.

"Naw!" said Miss Macallan—an energetic Scotch *no*. "There's no fire, and dinna go for to tear them to bits, and leave them. How do you know but I'd stick them together again?"

Her Scotch accent grew very strong in moments of anger.

"I did not intend to offend you, Euphemia," said Ogilvie more civilly—true to the diplomatic instinct, not to make an enemy if possible. "You know I have the greatest confidence in you, but it is impossible to foresee into whose hands letters might fall, and you yourself would take a similar precaution. Now what do I owe you?"

"Ah, well," looking at the paper she held, "it's just a trifle of five pounds two shillings and sevenpence halfpenny—but five pounds two shillings will do, I hate to be grasping. There's the particulars if you like to look at them."

"No, certainly not," cried Ogilvie, throwing down six beautiful gold pieces, the smallest of which Miss Macallum took up.

"I'm just wondering if I have change for ten shillings?" she said gravely.

"Pray don't trouble yourself."

"Well, then, I'll put paid to that little account."

"No—it's of no consequence," exclaimed Ogilvie, catching it up and putting it with the letters in his pocket. "Good-bye, Euphemia—thank you for the care you bestowed on Miss Riddell."

"She was a nice douce girlie, and I hope she will do well. I doubt those people at the other side will do as cheap and moderate for her as I did."

"Well, yes—you know Madame Falk has come into a

fortune, and means to adopt her. That's the reason I am out of it."

"Ay, and a good thing too. Aweel, my best wishes, cousin Ogilvie, for your happiness and that of your bonnie bride—and she is bonnie, I've seen her, you know—and just try and keep your temper, mon. You did not speak quite respectful just now, but blood is thicker than water, so I'll overlook it and keep your counsel."

Ogilvie thanked her and they parted better friends than could have been expected from the opening of the interview.

* * * * *

May had never before known what it was to work at high pressure, but Carr, having enlisted her and his much-enduring Aunt Sally in his service, was determined not to let the grass grow under his feet.

The day but one after he had held council with May they were whisked off to Paris by an early train, luncheon being served *en route* in luxurious style, and on arriving they found a carriage and Carr's servant waiting for them, while the *concierge*, and the rooms in the Rue de Vielle Cour were equally ready for their reception.

No sooner had Miss Barton and May taken off their out-door garments than Carr exclaimed:

"Suppose you have a cup of tea and come out? It's only four. We might look at some apartments and have a glance at that furniture shop in the Rue de la Paix, or call at that general agency place in the Rue Castiglione, and dine at Ladoyen's after—you know there is no time to lose."

"Mercy!" cried Miss Barton, "don't let us expend our strength in this vague way, we can do nothing till to-morrow. If you are inclined to be active, go round to Arthur's and get a list of apartments, it's rather a good time to look for them; but, Bernard, my dear boy, do not engage a palace, your mother would be miserable in a huge place—a good apartment of five or six pieces is about the mark, isn't it, May? and then we will have great pleasure in dining with you, if you will come back with us. Then to-morrow we'll set to work in earnest, we can do nothing until we have fixed on an apartment."

"Quite impossible!" echoed May.

"Then let us go to the theatre or——" returned Carr.

"Oh, no, it will be far nicer to sit under the trees and listen to the café chantant music," urged May.

"All right," said Carr.

"You and May can," added Miss Barton, "but I must come back to arrange things with Adrienne, who cannot arrive till eight."

"All right," said Carr again, and catching up his hat departed with a cheerful countenance.

When he returned to fetch his guests, he brought with him a list of at least fifty apartments, all in the near neighbourhood of the Champs Elysée, the Madeleine or St. Augustin, the rents of which made Miss Barton "hold her breath for a time." After dinner they had a careful examination of the catalogue, and selecting about ten which might suit, agreed to start early next morning to inspect them. "Then to-morrow we shall choose the abode, and I suppose in a week we can get the furniture—an extra week for tittivating—and then I can fetch my mother and——"

"Bless the boy, what a hurry he is in!" cried Miss Barton, interrupting him. "I shall be ready to hunt up rooms to-morrow at ten a.m., and once we have got them, we will go on at a great pace. Now, Bernard, I must go."

Carr sent for a *fiacre*, and handed his Aunt Sally in with much care. "Now," he said to May, "let us have a stroll in the moon-light." She readily assented, and they walked slowly towards the Arc de Triomphe. It was a delicious dry, warm night, the music from cafés chantant floated on the air, softened and refined by distance, and the fountains at the Ronde Point looked silvery beneath the moonbeams.

"You are lagging," said Carr to his companion, "I am a brute to drag you all this way."

"I am only pleasantly tired," said May, "and enjoy this delightful night, I assure you

"Well, sit down here and enjoy it without fatigue," and finding an unoccupied bench they rested there for some moments in silence. May's thoughts flew far away, to the last walk she had taken with Ogilvie in Kensington Gardens, the guarded tenderness with which he had spoken, the veiled passion of his tones. How could she have foreseen that all this delicate consideration would have ended as it did, by his asking her to be his

accomplice in cheating his wife ; and yet how charming he was, how sympathetic ! Nevertheless she earnestly and honestly hoped she might never see him again. What pain the wish gave her ! Absorbed in these thoughts she did not perceive that Carr was watching her closely ; the moist eyes glittering under their long lashes, the lips slightly apart, an occasional quiver passing over the soft red lips, the sad expression of her young face touched him.

"The moonlight is very beautiful," he said, "but somehow it makes one melancholy."

"Perhaps it does," replied May, rousing herself. "I suppose few can reach even my age without having stored up some sad memories."

"Do not think of them, May," said Carr, gently and kindly. "I hope your life will be smooth and happy. It is not for me to intrude myself on your confidence or your plans, but I do not think my mother will let you leave her, and it will be a kindness on your part to stay. You know she is fonder of you than of me. Oh, it is quite natural, I can do but little for her, yet she likes me much better than she did."

"She *must* love you !" cried May with conviction, "you are so sympathetic, so eager to do everything for her."

Carr smiled, a rather mischievous smile.

"I am glad you think so," he said. "It is a comfort to hear you say it ! Come on a little further and have a look down this beautiful avenue. Then we'll find a *fiacre* and drive home."

"She is breaking her heart over something," he thought as they strolled on. "Is it about that black-browed fellow Ogilvie ? she must be cured of such a heart-break."

Distract though she was, May could not but perceive the tender care he bestowed upon her, and she thanked God for having given her such true friends in her time of sore trouble.

After this little episode, there was no more time for sentiment or soothing. Miss Barton and May were rushed about from apartments to upholsterers, to decorators, to *tapisseries*, to china stores, to *bric-à-brac* shops, to every possible establishment where household goods could be bought, until they begged breath. Although Carr did not like to order anything without his coadjutors, yet he had opinions and tastes of his own—very

good taste. He by no means went in for gorgeous costliness, quiet harmonious colouring pleased him. A very pleasant abode was selected at the well-known corner of the Champs Elysées and the Avenue M— where the large windows admitted abundant light and air, and a good balcony afforded room for a hanging garden, so plentiful was the array of flowers Carr caused to be placed there.

Perhaps no occupation could have been devised which so thoroughly interested May, and drew her out of herself, as this task of assisting to prepare a delightful home for her valued friend, Madame Falk. The constant companionship of Carr acted like a tonic. There was something bright and breezy about him. He loved spending his money—not in wasting it—for he had a shrewd idea of getting the worth of it. And what magic seemed to be in the power of gold! Carr never appeared to be kept waiting for anything.

“You have really done wonders in a fortnight, Bernard,” said May, as they surveyed the result of their labours in the new apartment while waiting for Miss Barton, who had promised to meet them there. Constant companionship in the same occupation had made them familiar friends.

“*We* have done wonders, May! you are a capital assistant. Now I want you and Aunt Sally to have a good look round, and see that nothing is wanting. I had a letter from my mother this morning. She has been over-persuaded to stay for the wedding, which seems to have been hurried on tremendously, so I must go to it, too. I shall go across one day next week; it is to be on the second of August. Directly it is over we will return and I shall take my mother straight here.”

“Do you know Bernard, I think she had better come to her old house first, it would be a sort of shock to find all this prepared for her after her journey, and she is fond of the old place; she has fought a good fight there, and there are lots of old things she would like to take with her. Don’t buy any more, Bernard, and let dear Madame Falk come home to us. Then the next day bring her here, you two alone, and tell her how you have resigned the pleasure of her society because you feel she would be happier among old friends and associations. She will be grateful to you I am sure.”

“Don’t use the word grateful!” cried Carr. “Think of the

debt I owe her on my father's account—think of the wrongs she has endured."

May was silent for a moment, offering her hand to her companion in token of sympathy; he pressed it hard for a moment, and then rose to see if a tempting settee would not look better in another position.

"I have only one more suggestion to make, Bernard," she said. "Go to the best photographer you can find, and get a really good picture of yourself, to leave with Madame Falk."

"To leave," he repeated. "You all seem quite contented that, having found a family, I should be sent off into solitude again."

"What a cross speech! Why, Bernard, you know every one would be but too glad if you would stay in France or England."

"Yes! I am rather a cross-grained brute! It is of my own will I go, and I shall not change my ideas on the matter." He stepped out on the balcony as if to end the subject, and presently returned, exclaiming, "Here is Aunt Sally coming, along with the little music-woman, your friend!"

"Mademoiselle Perret!" exclaimed May, coming out to see. "Yes, so it is; she has been away for her holiday with one of her pupils, at Trouville. I shall be so glad to see her."

"Then as you will have their company, I'll be off to the photographer's. I can hear all about who to go to, at the hotel." He looked for his hat, and only waited to greet Aunt Sally and her companion.

Of course, Mademoiselle Perret embraced May with effusion, and poured forth a torrent of congratulations on her restoration to her friends and to civilisation. Then, Carr being safe out of the way, an ecstatic hour was spent in examining the apartment, in admiring the carpets, the curtains, the cabinets, all and every article of furniture in the rooms—the position, the view, the balcony, the flowers—until the exclamations of the French language, and they are neither few nor weak, were exhausted, and Mademoiselle Perret too.

A pause in their operations ensued, and the earnest workers found rest and relief from the heat and glare of the deserted town, in long drives in the beautiful neighbourhood of Paris.

Then Carr left for England; both Miss Barton and May freely confessed to each other how greatly they missed him. They

talked much and confidentially of the change in Madame Falk's life created by the curious discovery of her son, and May told her once severe critic, of her intention of taking service with Made-moiselle Perret. To this Miss B. would make no distinct reply ; no more than, "Wait till you have talked to Esther," could be extracted from her.

At last the wedding was over, and fully reported in the Society papers, half-a-dozen of which reached the Rue de Vieille Cour.

"It must have been a fine sight," remarked Miss Barton, "and I am sure Miss Conroy looked quite charming—I always thought her a little affected—I hope she will be happy."

"I do wish it—oh, how earnestly!" echoed May.

The actual fact of the marriage affected her very little, and reflecting upon all the circumstances attending it, she felt that the first bitterness of the blow which had fallen upon her was passing away ; what most depressed her now was the fear that the happiness of Frances might be sacrificed to the needs of a cold-hearted man, and that she herself had involuntarily played the part of an enemy towards the friend who had been true to her.

A joint letter from Madame Falk and her son soon gave a few more particulars.

The bride had looked quite fairy-like, the bridegroom, Carr added, like a man cut out of flint. Mr. and Mrs. Conroy were evidently highly pleased, and everything went off perfectly. Finally Carr said his mother would insist on looking at things and pictures in London, which was insufferably stuffy and empty, but they hoped to be in Paris on the following Wednesday, and that he was dying for the *dénouement* of their well-kept secret.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"CALLED BACK."

WEDNESDAY was a great day. May had made the little *salon* beautiful with flowers, Miss Barton had arranged a dainty dinner, and both were dressed and waiting considerably before the travellers arrived.

May, who had the strongest sympathy with Madame Falk, was quite tremulous when she thought of the delightful surprise which

awaited her on the morrow. The travellers arrived punctually, and both seemed extremely happy to be in the old quarters again.

Madame Falk looked younger and brighter than May had ever seen her look before. She had enjoyed her visit ; dear Mr. and Mrs. Conroy were all that was most kind and hospitable, but it was very nice to be back again in her old quarters, and to find May there, though May looked rather thin and pale.

Of course, Madame Falk was full of the wedding, and described the dresses, the ceremony, the company, the general *coup d'œil*, most eloquently and picturesquely.

"I must say," she observed, "that Mr. Ogilvie looked a little like a marble image, or rather a bronze image. He is very dark and I felt a little impatient with him, for he is making such an excellent marriage (Frances might have looked far higher), but when I thought how good he had been to you, May, I comforted myself by reflecting that such a man could *not* be a bad husband."

"I am sure he will not, *if* they have taken care to have his wife's money securely settled on herself," said Miss Barton drily.

"And I am sure you do him wrong!" cried May. "Mr. Ogilvie may be a little worldly, and rather ambitious—most clever men are. But he would never be unjust ; he will always be nice and considerate to Frances."

As she ceased to speak she perceived that Carr was watching her keenly, and she was vexed to feel her cheeks flush under his eyes.

"At all events, they are now man and wife, and must make the best of each other," observed Madame Falk. "Dear Mrs. Conroy looked so pretty! She was speaking about you, May ; I think she would like to have you with her this winter, but she has promised not to meddle with you till I go—to Australia."

As she said this she sighed unconsciously, and May exchanged a look with Carr.

They talked well into the night. At last Carr rose to leave them.

"Shall you be equal to an early expedition to-morrow morning, mother?" he asked.

"Yes, of course, Bernard ; I am not a bit tired."

"Then I will come here for you about half-past ten ; I want to show you some purchases I have made."

"Very well, I shall be delighted to see them."

She kissed him heartily, he shook hands with Miss Barton, his parting good-night was bestowed on May who was near the door, and it was accompanied by a soft, lingering look which suggested compassion to her somewhat sensitive spirit, and made her ask herself, "Can he guess?" but quickly came the answer "Impossible!" Yet that did not re-assure her. He was wonderfully kind and generous, she was growing quite fond of him, but how different from Ogilvie! He conveyed no sense of power of will, she felt so at home with him, as if he were no older or stronger than herself. She never felt with him that overpowering sense of superiority, of irresistible influence which held her captive to Ogilvie. Carr had a warm, affectionate heart too. May almost wished Madame Falk had agreed to go back with him to Australia, and had returned his warmth more heartily, but for herself it was better for her to remain in Paris. Madame Falk had been so long acclimatised to the habits and customs of an old and artificial society, that the rawness of a new country would have hardly been congenial to her.

Carr was punctual in keeping his appointment. May happened to be alone in the salon when he came in.

"My mother is not ready?" he asked.

"I will tell her you are here," said May rising.

"No, do not trouble her, she will come soon. I want to speak to you. I know she—my mother—is going to ask you to stay with her, and I hope you will consent. It will be good for her to have a bright girl with her, and it will be a good home for you, May."

"It will indeed—but I am not very bright. I am happy in my own way, Bernard, but I have always been grave."

"Not always so grave as you are now," he returned, looking away from her. "I hope I shall find you all smiles and sunshine when I come to Europe again, for of course I shall come occasionally to see my mother."

He paused, and then resumed with a little hesitation :

"Do you think she will miss me a little?"

"I do. She has no idea how much she will miss you till you are gone. We shall all miss you."

Carr was silent for a moment—took up and drew a paper-knife through his closed hand as if lost in thought, then he said :

"Thank you. It is very nice of you to be such a comrade, May. I feel I could tell you anything—that is nearly anything. You make me feel younger, more like my old self. I was delighted with society at first, everyone was so smooth and polished and amiable (at least, so *I* found society), but as I grew to know how easily one could commit one-self, how careful one must be, how deucedly sharp the women are, though always reminding you in a soft, delicate way that they are of a different sex from yourself, and must be especially treated in consequence, I got tired of it all ; *you* are the only real natural young woman I have met at this side of the world, and I hope *you'll* miss me a little too ?"

"I am sure I shall, Bernard. Indeed, I wish you could stay on near your mother, but, as you have said, your duty lies in your own country—you could find no work worthy of a man to do here, as you are not obliged to work for your bread."

"Yes—you understand things—at least, my idea of them. "I do hope my mother will be pleased with——"

Madame Falk's entrance cut his speech short.

"Have I kept you waiting, my dear Bernard? I am so sorry, but I had two or three letters to write."

"No matter. I have been improving my mind by a philosophic discussion with May. Doesn't my mother turn out a regular swell? I assure you, May, she went up 'top' of all the Dowagers at the wedding."

"Ah, Bernard, for an unsophisticated colonial, you have a neat method of flattering."

"Not quite unsophisticated, mother. I had a little training from Madame Zavadoskoï. Come, I have a carriage waiting."

"If you insist on carriages every day I shall lose the use of my limbs," said Madame Falk. And she left the room, followed by Carr, who gave May a friendly nod and smile as he went out.

With the scene between mother and son, as he led her through the pleasant luxurious home he had provided for her, we will not meddle. Madame Falk was infinitely touched on finding that he had divined her reluctance to plunge into a new country and a new life at her age, and she was greatly moved

by the thoughtful tenderness of his care for her. That interview drew her closer to him than anything had yet done. He was gratified to see how successful his idea had been, and enjoyed the pleasure with which his mother viewed and examined her new possessions—she pronounced his taste admirable, and was much interested in hearing of the part May played in the undertaking.

"He *is* good to me, dear," she said, with moist eyes, to May that evening, when they were alone together. "And I am ashamed of myself, of my selfishness, for being so pleased to stay in dear delightful Paris—but I did rather dread Australia, and then Bernard would marry—and I should only be in the way."

"You would never be in his way. You do not know how dearly he loves you."

"Well, he makes me very happy. Isn't he a wonderful fellow—considering the rough up-bringing he has had? He is naturally a gentleman!"

"He is, indeed, through and through," cried May, "and clever too. He is wonderfully kind to me. I am almost ashamed of the freedom and candour with which I speak to him."

"And why not, May? I mean to adopt you, my dear—we were always friends—you suit me, and Sarah too. We shall be all the better for a youthful element in our small household—and you have no one to turn to, so it will be a mutual benefit!"

Tears and kisses sealed the bargain, and May felt she had indeed found a home.

The business of moving was not a long process.

Both Carr and May were amazed and amused at the curious time-worn bits of furniture—the homely relics—Madame Falk carried to her new home. The only shabby room in her new apartment was her own study or Cabinet de Travail, where she surrounded herself with her old belongings, adding only a fine photograph of Carr—in which he looked, as he was, a very handsome man.

October was upon them before they were thoroughly settled, and people were fast returning from the sea-side—the baths—the mountains.

Friends flocked to call on Madame Falk in her new and delightful quarters—and among the first came Madame Dupont, ac-

accompanied by her son. May was not at home, but the numerous and flattering enquiries which both made respecting her, showed Madame Falk that the news of her changed circumstances, had altered the lady's views of a possible marriage considerably. Nothing had interested Madame Falk's large circle of acquaintance, for a long time, so much as the sudden appearance of a son, whose riches were, of course, greatly exaggerated, and for awhile she found herself a heroine in everyone's estimation. Consequently invitations poured in—which, as time went on, and May was found to be treated as a daughter, were extended to that young lady—she, however, made her mourning an excuse for staying at home.

In October Carr went to England for hunting, and spent some time at the Chase. He wrote tolerably often. Neither Frances nor her husband were there, having gone to Scotland for their wedding trip—and then going for a tour in Norway.

At present, wrote Carr, they were house-hunting in London, as Ogilvie was very anxious to be settled, hoping to be in Parliament before the session opened.

Such was the position of things at the beginning of the winter. May was slowly, but steadily, recovering her mental tone, and her reviving interest in life was throwing her past trouble into the shade, when Carr returned to Paris.

It was Madame Falk's Sunday when he made his appearance among her visitors, who all paused in their conversation to look at or speak to him.

May was at the tea-table and assisted with assiduity by Dupont, whom Carr stared at as haughtily as Ogilvie himself could have done.

"Who is that fellow?" he asked, sitting down by Miss Barton, who was not speaking to any one for the moment.

"Don't you remember Dupont? The man who wanted to marry May? Oh, nearly two years ago."

"No, I don't know him. But you forget I was an outsider in those days. Stay—used he not to be at Madame Zavadosko's—that first winter I was in Paris?"

"Yes, he always goes to the Zavadosko parties."

"H'm, yes, I remember; shocking little cad."

"No, indeed, he is not! He is very gentlemanlike."

"I suppose I am no judge," returned Carr, turning from her

and, placing himself beside May, began to speak to her in English.

This rudeness shocked her, and as he spoke of the Chase and the hunting there, she explained the subject of conversation to M. Dupont, adding, quickly, and in a low tone: "Pray speak French! You can, quite well; and it is uncivil not to do so."

Carr looked determined and irate for a moment, then a sudden smile lit up his face as if he had shaken off the unreasonable spirit, and turning to M. Dupont explained, in tolerable French, that he was afflicted with English *mauvaise honte*, and hesitated to murder the beautiful language of monsieur. Dupont was all smiles and amiability, and May gave Carr a little approving nod, which renewed the *entente cordiale* between them.

She was pleased to see the warmth with which Madame Falk welcomed her son, and he evidently brightened up at her affectionate greeting.

She had invited one or two of her friends to dinner—an artist, a journalist, and an old English resident, who had been there through the Empire and before it. The dinner was very pleasant, and much lively talk and badinage helped digestion. Afterwards in the *salon*, Carr, while the rest were discussing the English occupation of Egypt, managed to have a little conversation with May.

"What are you going to do with that unfortunate Frenchman?" he asked.

"Who?" said May, with wondering eyes.

"Why that neat little chap, Dupont."

"Oh, nothing! I have nothing to do with him."

"But you *had*?"

"I have no right to know anything about that," returned May, unblushingly. "It was only a little business talk between Madame Dupont and your mother. I am sure Miss Barton told you, which was not right of her."

"It is no great matter," replied Carr, looking with kind though laughing eyes into her's—very handsome, expressive, brown eyes, May thought. "Do you ever hear from Ogilvie now?"

"No, of course not. Our correspondence has naturally passed into the hands of his wife. She is very good, and writes oftener than she used. They are going to take a house in May

Fair—a district I know nothing about. Frances seems very happy."

Carr kept his eyes steadily on her face while she spoke.

"Yes," he said, "I fancy a public life, if I may say so, would suit her." After this talk Carr abruptly changed the subject. "Do you know, I have come to bid you a tolerably long good-bye?"

"Indeed!"

"Yes. I intend to start for Sydney—in about a fortnight."

"I am very sorry, and rather surprised, though you have always talked of going."

"I did not think of going before Christmas, but I think it is time I went," he said thoughtfully. "And I want to 'do' Egypt on the way. I shall not tell my mother till to-morrow, so please say nothing to her."

"You may trust me," said May.

"I do, utterly. We have been loyal comrades, and will be—eh?"

"Yes, I hope so, Bernard."

"And—you are pretty comfortable here?" he said.

"It is the most charming abode. Dear Madame Falk is quite happy—and your picture hangs opposite her writing table, and I catch her often looking at it. You know, Bernard, she writes a little still for one or two English weekly papers."

"She must do as she likes," said Carr absently.

"Do you know," continued May confidentially, "that I think your mother would like to go out and pay you a visit by and by, when you are settled."

"Do you?" he exclaimed. "Then so she shall. May, you are a comforting angel, and you shall come with her."

"Oh, no. I must stay and take care of your Aunt Sally."

Here Madame Falk called her son, and the confidential conference came to an end.

The unaffected regret with which his mother received the news of his approaching departure was balm to Carr's sound, warm heart, and he did his utmost to make their last days together bright and enjoyable. A good deal was said, half in jest, half in earnest, about the visit Madame Falk was to pay him in Australia, and all went well and cheerfully, but May felt that they would miss his strong and joyous presence terribly.

The day of separation drew near with extraordinary rapidity. Carr determined to take the English mail steamer from Brindisi to Alexandria, and spend some little time in Egypt, so everyone was reading books on Egypt and discussing Egyptology.

One afternoon May had returned from Galighani's with an old but delightful book on the prevalent subject—"Egypt of the Pharaohs and the Khedive"—and was curled up on a sofa, already deep in its pages, when Carr came in. As she looked up from her book, it struck May that the joyous brightness which usually illuminated his face was all gone, and there was a look of pain in his eyes.

"Where is my mother?" he asked, throwing himself into an armchair as if weary.

"She is gone to Versailles, and will not return before six."

"And Aunt Sally?"

"Has gone with her."

"And have you been indoors all day?"

"Oh, no. I have been to the library, and found another delightful book about Egypt."

"Oh, I am sick of Egypt!" exclaimed Carr, impatiently, and, starting up, began to walk to and fro. "I know I ought to go, and I want to go; and—I can't tear myself away."

"You astonish me, Bernard. I thought you had quite made up your mind, and liked the idea."

"I feel it would be wiser to go, and I have tried to put a good face on it, but——" He walked away to the window, and turning, looked at her for a moment steadily in silence. How full of earnest sympathy she looked. Her sweet curved lips slightly apart, her pathetic, questioning eyes fixed on his; the very lines of her delicate figure as she bent gently forward, a charming, poetical exemplification of the word "waiting."

"But," resumed Carr, "it is awfully hard, May."

He came quickly back, and sat down beside her.

"Don't you see—don't you feel that I cannot bear to leave you? I can't help telling you, though I know you don't care a rap for me, in *that* way I mean. But I—I cannot bear to look forward to life without you, dear. And we *might* be so happy. Don't you think you could—manage to love me a little, May? No, that would not do. I should be mad with jealousy and misery if you did not love me as well as I love you."

"Bernard!" almost breathlessly. "I am more astonished than I can say. Why—why do you love me? I—I have no love to give, and you deserve to be loved, dear Bernard."

"Will it not wake again? I ask no questions—I seem to know everything. I will wait patiently—you are such a sweet, frank companion. I was fathoms deep in love before I knew it."

"Bernard," said May, in a low, hesitating tone, while the colour flamed in her cheek. "Do not pain yourself and me by forcing me to repeat that this is impossible."

"Impossible to be my wife, May? Why?—is your aversion to me so unconquerable?"

"Aversion? Oh, no. If I liked and valued you less, Bernard, I might be more ready to give you the dross of indifference for the gold you offer me. But it would be disloyal to accept you. You will forget me in a little while, and find someone fairer and younger than I am, who will give you her whole heart—and—do not speak to me again of love or marriage, dear Bernard."

"Dear!" he repeated. "Why do you mock me with such a word?" And rising, he walked away, then back again.

"I believe it pains you to pain me, May," he said, "and I am a weak fool to have troubled you—for you have never misled me. I could not say I had much hope, yet I could not help trying my luck—and—but there—let this be a dead secret between us, May. Try to forget it, and treat me as a friend still; don't shut me out of your heart and confidence because I made a big mistake. I will not pain you again. Write to me freely; you shall see no trace of a lover in my letters—though, how I love you no words of mine can express. I'll leave you, and when we meet this evening I shall be just the same as yesterday, May, my darling."

He pressed her hands between both his, and left her.

For some minutes she stood half-stunned and motionless, Half-frightened at the effect she had produced, her heart throbbing with tenderness and regret. Why could she not love him, and give her life to him? Did she not love him? She could not tell; only she felt ashamed to think that her heart should open its doors so soon again to another guest after having so lately closed them in bitterness and humiliation against its first occupant. She could not understand herself, and it was

some time before she could regain composure, and struggle back to her ordinary seeming.

The day but one following Carr bade them good-bye. He was quite himself, but his face looked grave and a little worn. He dined with his mother before starting, and took a fair share of the conversation, which was a little forced, for every one was grieved to part with him, and "Aunt Sally" blew her nose at intervals like a minute gun.

May strove hard to look and be as usual, but she felt as if she were assisting at her own funeral. Carr avoided meeting her eye, and they said very little to each other. When dinner was over Madame Falk and her son retired to her study, where they took leave of each other; Carr coming out after some time, looking sad and grave. Madame Falk appeared no more that evening.

"Good-bye, Aunt Sally. I hope I shall find you as young as ever when I come back; your heart, I know, will always be in the right place. May"—at last his eyes met hers—what a tale of tenderness and longing they told. He took both her hands, then bent down and kissed her gently on the brow. "God be with you," was all he said. She was speechless. She could only return his pressure with trembling hands. A sense of despair made her cold and faint. She strove to answer—and he was gone.

* * * * *

The succeeding week was exceeding doleful, and oppressively quiet. The sense of life and strength and buoyancy that Carr infused into the little household was gone, and no one seemed to have known its full value till it was lost. Madame Falk was especially depressed, for, besides missing her son greatly, a keen touch of self-reproach mixed itself with her musings. She ought to have valued him more, she ought to have gone with him to his Antipodean home. Miss Barton did not keep her regrets to herself. She repeated, if not hourly, very frequently, that the only person who really estimated Bernard at his true value, who thoroughly understood him, and reciprocated his feelings, was herself. The next week was not much better, and the third they began to be more like themselves. Meantime they had one letter from the traveller. He had stopped at Lyons, in order to look over the factories there—which he had passed over hitherto—and thence

he would make his way into Italy. He was in no hurry, and the weather was very fine. His mother was not to expect another letter till he reached Brindisi, so gradually life began to flow in its accustomed channels, and the sharpness of regret was blunted.

To all but May ; she presented a brave front to the kind, but by no means watchful, eyes of her elderly companions, who, accustomed to her quiet ways, her habitual absence of colour, took no notice of her dejected silence all day. She went about her work and ordinary duties unfailingly, but in the darkness and stillness of night she wept and prayed, and saw in its full depth the terrible error she had committed. Then the depth and breadth of the affection which had grown up steadily, though unconsciously, for her rejected lover, revealed itself. When he asked her to be his wife she did not know that she loved him with a wifely love, and she did not like to acknowledge that time had so soon obliterated what she thought was indelible—it hurt her false pride.

"How time flies," said Madame Falk, looking up from a letter which had reached her in the evening. "Bernard says he will be starting—let me see—to-morrow evening for Alexandria. He was a little too soon at Brindisi, and is horridly bored. He seems quite depressed, dear boy ; he will be all right when he is in Egypt and interested in that curious country."

"To-morrow—to-morrow," something kept repeating in May's ears, when, having pleaded that inexhaustible excuse, a headache, she escaped to bed. "Why did she feel this fresh agony of regret, at having lost what she now felt would have been the crowning good of life ? True, he had gone weeks ago, but now he was on the eve of leaving Europe, on the verge of new scenes and fresh associates which would help him to forget her, and the pain she had inflicted." Her torment was too bitter for tears, and she found herself saying aloud : "Come back to me, dear Bernard, for I love you ! come back !"

Worn out with fruitless sorrow, she dropped into a state of semi-slumber, and dreamed she was again at the little Norman mill, and calling as she often did when he had stayed to write letters, and she wanted to walk or drive. "Are you ready, Bernard ?" and his reply came so clear and loud, "Coming, May," that she started up wide awake—to find silence, darkness,

hopelessness. Then tears came, and merciful sleep, this time without dreams.

"I really believe, May, you want a tonic," said Madame Falk next morning. "I believe you are getting into your old way of sleeplessness, as you used long ago in your poor father's time; iron and quinine is the thing for you."

"I do not think I have taken enough exercise of late," returned May stoutly. "If Miss Barton will put up with a dull companion, we might walk to the Bon Marché. I have commissions for Frances."

"The rage rich people have for bargains is enough to make one sick, but I will go, if you like, May," said Aunt Sally.

In the next two days, May walked herself into a state of utter fatigue, and so slept. The third, she went to help Mademoiselle Perret, who had ventured to take an additional room on her *rez de chaussée* and wished to move into it some of Madame Falk's discarded furniture, which that lady had bestowed upon her, and in caring and thinking for another May found some relief.

It was dusk when she had finished, and she was not sorry when the concierge came to announce that Madame had sent a carriage for Mademoiselle, who would please come at once, as the coachman was to return for Madame, who was at the Rue Prony.

"Ah, yes! The Baroness de Marsac gives a musical reception this afternoon," said May, putting on her cloak. "I had nearly forgotten dear mademoiselle! Madame Falk begs you will dine with her on Sunday."

"But certainly, with joy. Make haste, little one; *au revoir*, a thousand thanks."

As soon as she alighted the carriage drove off, and May slowly ascended to their apartment, oppressed with a sense of mental weariness, infinitely more exhausting than physical fatigue. She was admitted by their new servant who smiled joyously as if something pleasant had occurred, and said something which May did not heed. She went on listlessly and opened the *salon* door.

The lamps had been already lighted, and May thought how pleasant and cheerful the room looked, when the sound of something moving near the piano behind her, made her start

and turn. She uttered a slight cry and caught the back of a chair to steady herself, for coming through the door leading into the *salle-à-manger* came Carr himself, his eyes alight with joy.

"Do forgive me for startling you, May. I am a thoughtless idiot. Why! May, you are not going to faint. Let me hold you," catching her in his arms and holding her closely. "Am I an intrusive fool for coming back to try my fate once more?"

"I am not faint, Bernard," in a half-whisper.

"Well, stay here one moment and listen to me; you would never guess why I came."

"Why, oh, why?" said May, too overpowered with joy at the sight of him to resist his embrace.

"I dreamt a few night ago that I heard you call me—heard it so distinctly that I woke myself crying out: 'Coming, May, coming,' and I came. Have I been the victim of a delusion? Am I a moonstruck imbecile?"

"No!" she exclaimed, and he felt the quiver of delight that thrilled through her, and set her heart beating against his own. 'I have been calling you back, Bernard, ever since I let you go.'

A confusion of breathless kisses, silent rapture, a whole life concentrated into the present moment, and the gradual settling down into the "sober certainty of waking bliss."

There needs no other word, save "Finis" which at this stage of a true story would mean "beginning."

THE END.

Bianca Capello,

GRAND-DUCHESS OF TUSCANY.

THIS Venetian lady, whose life was a most romantic one, was born at Venice in 1542; she was descended from the noble house of the Capelli, and daughter of Bartolomeo Capello.

Her early youth—in fact, the whole of her childhood—was passed in the retirement of her father's palace, where she had intercourse with, and met, only the members of her family and her near relations, according to the custom of the country.

In the middle of the sixteenth century, the Florentines, in common with other nations, formed a commercial establishment at Venice, which was greatly esteemed. Agents were appointed there, by several of the most noble and wealthy families of Florence, to transact the business of their employers in the mercantile houses. One of, if not the most distinguished of these, was that of the Salviati, who had as clerk a Florentine youth of obscure birth, whose family were poor, one Pietro Buonaventuri—a man more indebted to nature than fortune, for he possessed a handsome face, fine figure, insinuating manners, an aspiring, ambitious temperament, and a decided turn for intrigue.

The house of Salviati was opposite the palace of the Capelli and the young Florentine had plenty of opportunities of observing Bianca, and in 1565, when she was about twenty-three, her lovely face attracted his attention, her rank flattered his ambition, while, by the difficulties that seemed to threaten the course of his "true love," his darling passion for adventure was stimulated and inflamed. For some time he vainly sought to gain access to the lady fair who had captivated his fancy, and banished from his mind all thoughts of the cash-book, ledger and such-like unromantic things, young Venetian women, especially those of noble blood, being kept under such strict surveillance that all his attempts were frustrated, and he had to be satisfied with an interchange of glances, which the aspiring and vain clerk did not fail to construe to his advantage. The close confinement

in which Bianca was kept, and the austerity with which she was treated by her relatives, made her little less solicitous than himself to facilitate a meeting, if only to break the dull monotony of her daily life.

Love laughs at bolts and bars, and Buonaventuri was a bold fellow ; so when Bianca repaired to church, attended only by her maid, to offer up her devotions, he whispered his admiration into her willing ear ; not, however, allowing the credulous fair one to know he was of humble extraction, but represented himself as a partner in the house of Salviati.

His handsome face, fine figure, fascinating manners, the delightful way in which he made love, the novelty and charm of the situation, intoxicated and deceived the daughter of the house of Capelli. She believed that she loved and was beloved, and love "never doubts the reality of the sentiment which flatters its hopes." The maid, no doubt bribed by Pietro, agreed to aid the lovers, and by the help of a false key admitted the Florentine at midnight to breathe his vows at the feet of his mistress.

These stolen interviews went on for some months without discovery ; the secret was known only to three people, who, through mutual interest, were naturally silent ; but when it became likely that a fourth person would appear, whose silence it would be less easy to ensure, the frail Bianca became a prey to gloomy fears, having before her eyes the terrors of a cloister and life-long imprisonment. In this dilemma, after a hurried consultation, Pietro proposed flight, and she, seeing that it was their only means of safety, secured, by way of a dowry, a costly suite of jewels belonging to her father, and eloped with him to Florence. Buonaventuri, on the journey thither, was compelled to disclose the mean deception he had practised, excusing it as a stratagem of love, throwing himself on her tenderness for pardon. When he revealed his real name and station, the lady's situation was such that she had no alternative, and was obliged to give her hand, and promise faith and affection to the man by whom she had been so grossly deceived and betrayed. The marriage took place in a village near Bologna, and when the benediction was given, the newly married couple proceeded to Florence, and besought Pietro's father to give them shelter, which he did, and shortly after Bianca gave birth to a daughter, whom she named Pelegrina.

The Capelli family, enraged at the flight and disgrace of their daughter, thirsted and clamoured for revenge. Grimani, patriarch of Aquileia, Bianca's uncle, in his anger, procured a decree from the Senate, by which his niece and her husband were exiled, as outlaws, from Venice, and a reward of a thousand ducats offered to those who should bring the culprits to justice. Bartolomeo also offered a similar sum on fulfilment of the same condition. Pietro's uncle, Giovan Battista Buonaventuri, accused of being privy to the amour of his nephew, was thrown into one of those dreary, water-lapped dungeons of which Venice had many, and was suffered to perish; while the maid, whom the lovers in the hurry of their flight had neglected to take with them, expiated her breach of trust by a fate not less terrible.

Bianca, the "victim of credulity and fraud," remained concealed in the house of her father-in-law in Florence for some time, and while there she learnt of the barbarous proceedings of her relatives at Venice. She also heard that ruffians were to be sent to Florence to tear her from this poor asylum, and everything tending to show her the horrors and dangers of her situation, she determined to solicit protection from Francesco, son of the Grand Duke Cosimo de Medici, governor of Tuscany.

There are various accounts of her introduction to this prince, some which bear about them an air of romance, which makes them almost incredible. The following account, however, is admitted and reported by nearly all the Florentine writers. Francesco had early received notice from his agents at Venice of the elopement of the low-born Buonaventuri with the daughter of the Capelli, and its consequences. It is said that Bianca dreading the decree, remained closely concealed in her father-in-law's house, scarcely venturing out for fear of being seen and recognized, even to hear mass at a neighbouring church. One day, as Francesco rode by Buonaventuri's house, a disturbance in the streets drew Bianca to the window, and so absorbed was she in the affray, that she did not see the prince, who, struck by her beauty, stopped to look at her. On at length meeting his admiring gaze, she started and retired in alarm, telling her mother-in-law what had happened. Some time having elapsed, and nothing of a startling nature occurring, she recovered her tranquillity, keeping herself, however, in strict seclusion,

redoubling her precautions, and abstaining even from attending mass.

Francesco, who had been deeply impressed by Bianca's brilliant beauty, rode daily through the street in which he had transiently beheld her, hoping to get a second glimpse of the charms which had bewitched him. This proving futile, in the same hope he visited all the neighbouring churches. Baffled here too, he told his adventure, in confidence, to his chamberlain, Mandragone, who, with the aid of his wife, a clever *intriguante*, traced the beautiful stranger to her hiding-place. This woman, under a plausible pretence, formed an acquaintance with Buonaventuri's mother, and by her presents, insinuating manners and liberality, won her confidence to such a degree that she disclosed to the chamberlain's lady the story of Bianca's marriage, its consequences, and her natural apprehensions. Of course she offered her interest with her husband to win for the beautiful Venetian the protection of the prince, whose clemency and justice she did not fail to praise in extravagant terms. Mandragone's wife having imposed upon the mother-in-law without difficulty, Bianca was prevailed upon by her solicitations and arguments to pay a visit to the chamberlain's house, where they were received with deference and courtesy by their new friends, by whom she was persuaded to recapitulate her story. Her hostess listened to the tale with well-simulated interest, and when it was concluded, after praising the generosity and munificence of Francesco, promised to engage his patronage for her lovely guest. After partaking of a repast, the mother-in-law was, by an artful stratagem, drawn from the room, which Francesco, a few minutes after, abruptly entered. Bianca, surprised and confused by this unexpected incident, sank at the feet of her royal visitor, and raising her lovely eyes to his, besought his compassion in tremulous accents. The prince, as he raised this charming suppliant, assured her of his services and protection, after which he at once withdrew, leaving Bianca both surprised and astonished at his sudden appearance. The chamberlain's wife apologised, on her return, for the intrusion of the prince, who, she said, had a key to a private door of the house, and was accustomed to come in without ceremony.

"But, doubtless," remarked this wily woman, "you chid him for his intrusion."

"I asked of him," replied Bianca, "only security for my honour."

Her hostess did not fail to seize upon this opportunity to further eulogize Francesco, a subject on which this Tuscan lady seems to have been peculiarly eloquent, and she entreated her guest not to check in any way an acquaintance thus accidentally, yet auspiciously, commenced, and which could not but prove very advantageous to her.

Such, it is alleged by contemporary writers, was the origin of the connection so important to the future destiny of the fair Venetian.

"This account," says one of her biographers, "is liable to objections; it appears improbable that the prince, who learned from his agents, at the time it happened, of the flight of the lovers, should have been ignorant of the circumstances attending their asylum, and the conduct of the Venetian states, or should have been obliged for his introduction to stratagem and surprise. But a foundation of truth, enough for the purposes of this narration, is sufficiently apparent in the charms and defenceless situation of Bianca, the character in which her husband stood as an agent for the commerce of Florence, and the temper of Francesco, whose sensibility to female beauty was well known."

He espoused the cause of the fair fugitive with extreme ardour, and negotiated with the Venetians on her behalf, endeavouring to obtain, through his agent at Venice, and by the mediation of the Pope's Nuncio, a reversal of their severe decree. His efforts, strenuous though they were, and upheld by the Church, proved useless. The Council of Ten remained inexorable. The property bequeathed to Bianca by her mother, some six thousand ducats, was withheld, and the decree pronouncing her an alien from her country was confirmed. Francesco was advised by his agent to lessen his efforts, so implacable and enraged appeared the temper of the republic, to wait until a more propitious opportunity should occur, when, the affair no longer being of recent occurrence, their desire for vengeance might have grown cool. He assured him that the elopement had excited general interest; that the states considered their dignity as a body to be affected, to relent, therefore, would be regarded as a dangerous precedent. He also added a hint to the effect that it did not become the dignity of

an ambassador and the representative of a prince to interfere in the affairs of a private family, especially as the business did not promise a favourable issue, which was likely to reflect disgrace on its advocates, and which, above all, could not fail to draw upon Florence the resentment of the republic.

Francesco, like a wise prince, took his agent's advice, and, relaxing his zeal, proceedings were suffered to decline; chiefly, perhaps, because Bianca remained in perfect security under his protection. In 1565 all applications on her behalf to the senate had ceased.

The prince, who almost hourly became more and more attached to his lovely *protégée*, purchased, on the *Via Maggiore* at Florence, a splendid palace for her, adorned with art treasures and every luxury money could procure, and here he spent every moment he could snatch from the affairs of state, in her society. She was by no means indifferent to the devotion of her munificent patron, though for some years a veil of secrecy and decorum was drawn over their intrigue.

The greater part of the ducal powers had been handed over to Francesco by his father, who had retired from public affairs, at the commencement of the lovers' acquaintance, and Cosimo, though well aware of the *liaison* between his son and the new favourite, affected to overlook it, because an alliance was being negotiated by him between Francesco, reigning Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the Emperor Maximilian's sister, Donna Joanna of Austria, whose hand had been asked in marriage.

"The Italian princes, involved in a struggle for precedence, regarded with jealousy the power and magnificence of the Medici. The interest of the house of Austria, it was conceived by Cosimo, would strengthen their cause and enable them to defeat the machinations of their enemies. In a political view, Francesco acceded to the opinions of his father, nor ventured, though but little inclined to the marriage, to throw any impediment in the way of the negotiation."

The attachment of Francesco to Bianca was closely concealed while negotiations for this alliance were going on, but he did not make the slightest attempt to disguise the warmth and extent of his feelings for the fair Venetian, once Joanna of Austria was his wife, a circumstance not much to the Grand Duke's credit.

Bianca was introduced at Court shortly after this marriage, about 1566, and her relations with Francesco openly avowed. She met with great admiration, and was courteously treated, while the Duke's devotion to her seemed to be unlimited. Carried away by these successes, she began to form the most aspiring projects, and induced the prince, in a moment of delirium, to make a solemn vow before an image of the Virgin, to espouse her as soon as they should be freed from their present ties.

Bianca's triumph was shared by her husband in part, who, being low-bred, and as mean a rascal as ever stepped, took the duke's bounty and allowed himself to be invested with the title and office of chamberlain, was admitted to a part in the government, and consulted on the affairs of State. Peter Buonaventuri did not long enjoy the honours of the giddy height to which he had climbed through his wife's dishonour. Pride and presumption cost him his friends and gained him powerful enemies, while his wholesale abuse of the powers entrusted to him drew on him the hatred of the people.

"The Florentines," says a historian, "had not yet forgotten the usurpations of the Medici, by whom the republic had been abolished; a number of malcontents still remained, who waited but an occasion openly to shew the detestation which lurked in their hearts of the masters imposed upon them. Francesco, who, without the good qualities, inherited the vices of his father, was still more the object of their abhorrence; while, incensed at the oppression and arrogance of the upstart chamberlain, they meditated his ruin, which his own indiscretion precipitated.

The cause which actually led to his assassination in the streets of Florence, was his intrigue with Cassandra Bougiani, a lovely Florentine, of the Ricci family. Owing to a coldness having taken place between Bianca and Buonaventuri, he sought to console himself with gallantries amongst the ladies of the Court, but he imprudently boasted of his friendship with the fair Cassandra, and drew upon himself the anger of the Ricci, who besought Francesco to punish the insolence and presumption of his chamberlain. Francesco warned him of his danger, mildly remonstrated with him on the folly of his conduct, and advised greater moderation and caution, adding a hint to the effect that

even *his* protection would avail him little against the poignard of the assassin. The chamberlain, in excuse, complained bitterly of the malice of his enemies, and pretended that the imputations thrown on him were calumnies, fabricated through the jealousy of those who would fain have enjoyed the same favour in his master's eyes as he did. The duke affected to believe these excuses, but told Buonaventuri that for the future he would only have himself to blame if his conduct got him into trouble.

The arrogant chamberlain trusted too much in the forbearance of his patron, and continued his indiscretions, while the Ricci daily importuned Francesco for justice. To rid himself of these importunities and to save his indiscreet chamberlain, he determined to send him away to France. This plan, however, was not favoured by Bianca, who implored her lover not to send Buonaventuri away, and promised to use all her influence to try and get him to alter his conduct. But he received her remonstrations with rudeness and violence, swearing he would never give up Cassandra, and after insulting and threatening his wife he left her overwhelmed with indignation and grief. The duke, who was in the next room, and had heard all that had passed through a secret door, that was open, concealed by the tapestry hangings, entered, and finding her in tears said:

"Do not discompose yourself on this matter. If your husband will take no advice, we must leave him to his fate."

On rushing into the street, Buonaventuri saw one of the Ricci conversing with two other noblemen, and accosting him in furious terms, he threatened him with a pistol, saying he would shoot him if he dared again to complain of his conduct. Ricci, naturally and justly enraged at this fresh insult, went again to the duke, of whom he demanded "immediate satisfaction for the affront he had received." The grand-duke went with him into the garden, where they had a long conversation, and as Ricci quitted the duke the latter was heard to say:

"Do as you please, I shall take no notice of your conduct."

That evening Francesco left Florence, and at midnight the too gallant chamberlain was poignarded in the streets of the city. Some historians give the date of his assassination as 21st December, 1569, others assert that it did not take place until five years later, 1574.

The following is an account of it given by one of Bianca's biographers :

"The chamberlain returning on the night of 21st December, 1569, attended by two servants, armed, from the house of Cassandra, was attacked on the bridge *Della Trinita* by more than twelve banditti ; the combat was unequal ; in the beginning of the fray one of the servants made his escape, the other fell by his master. Buonaventuri, having killed the leader of the assassins, defended himself with vigour, cleared the bridge, and had nearly reached his house, where a fresh band of assassins awaited him, so intent were his enemies on his destruction ; exhausted at length by his exertions, and unable to avoid assailants thus multiplied, the impetuous chamberlain rushed on his fate, and fell covered with wounds. Ruffians at the same time broke into the chamber of his mistress, whom they murdered in her bed. By these barbarous sacrifices was the ferocious honour of the Ricci appeased."

On the following morning when Bianca heard of the horrible fate of her husband, she flew to the palace, to urge Francesco to take vengeance on his murderers. She found the duke was still absent at Pratolino. He did not return for two days, when he endeavoured to appease Bianca's anger by promising to punish the assassins, but so purposely slow were the proceedings that they managed to escape to France. It was suspected that the prince was privy to the affair, and afterwards he confessed that he was to Giovan Battista Confetti, his chaplain.

The death of Buonaventuri drew closer the ties between his widow and Francesco, from whom he could hardly tear himself away to attend to State affairs, which disgusted and offended the Florentines. But nothing could shake the influence of Bianca with her lover, though she incurred the hatred of the people, and, becoming alarmed by the openly-shown discontent, she courted the friendship of all the Medici family. Cosimo Francesco's father, was living in retirement with his wife, Camilla Martelli, interesting himself little in public affairs, and seeing he was not likely to be of much use to her, she turned her attention to Francesco's brother, Cardinal Ferdinand, and his sister, Donna Isabella de Medici. The latter, a great favourite with the reigning grand-duke, was unhappily married to Giordano Orsino, for whose nephew, Troilo, she had conceived a violent

affection, which led ultimately to her tragical death. Finding her attachment favoured by Bianca, who was as unscrupulous as clever, she accepted the favourite's proffered friendship, and did not fail to flatter her brother's passion. Of all the Medici, Cardinal Ferdinand was the most popular, and though Francesco did not like him much or confide in him greatly, his favour was sought eagerly by Bianca, as a protection against the Florentine people, and she studied his character closely in order to make herself necessary to him, persuading Francesco to increase his revenue, and lend him twenty thousand scudi, a sum he was much in want of, having exceeded the limits of his fortune through his love of pomp and magnificence, while she added the most flattering testimonies of deference and respect to these substantial services ; while being mistress of every avenue to the heart, the cardinal's cold and austere nature yielded to her wily blandishments, and, her influence with the chief members of her lover's family secured, her supremacy at Court was assured and rested on a solid and reliable basis.

Francesco's marriage naturally turned out unhappily. The Grandduchess Joanna had been educated in a bigoted court, was stiff and unyielding in her manners, while her intellect was narrow, her accomplishments few, her opinions rigid and obstinate. Altogether, she was a woman little calculated to win a husband's love from such a brilliant, beautiful rival as the fair, frail Venetian. Moreover, she was extremely severe to the shortcomings of her spouse, complaining incessantly to his father, and embittering his mind by almost hourly reproaches. Her jealousy, violence, severity and peevishness, completed his aversion and disgust, turning indifference into hatred, and rivetting closer the chains which bound him to the lively, clever vivacious widow.

The duchess was neglected, while the whole court crowded about Bianca, who was surrounded by splendour and adulation.

Joanna, almost mad with rage and grief at her deserted condition and the humiliations heaped upon her, meeting her husband and his favourite one day on the bridge of La Trinita, roused to a tigerish ferocity at the sight, ordered her attendants to throw her hated rival into the Arno, but Count Heliodori Costelli, who happened to be with her, stepped forward and represented to her that her evil purpose was a suggestion of the

devil. So, vengeance yielding to superstition, the duchess recalled her mandate, and Bianca passed on in safety, little knowing the narrow escape she had had of a speedy exit from her life of splendid wickedness.

The death of Cosimo, about the year 1574, secured to Francesco the sovereignty, and removed from his favourite a watchful eye, and determined her on the execution of a long, meditated and most audacious project. Donna Joanna had borne her husband several daughters, but the want of a son afforded Francesco incessant vexation and grief, as he was averse to the succession of either of his brothers. As he had no legitimate male heir, he had often expressed a wish to Bianca that she should become the mother of a boy, and she, anxious to secure her power over her lover, earnestly desired it also, as the duke had promised to make her his wife, if it were ever in his power to do so, on condition that she should first present him with a son. One obstacle to the elevation she coveted had been removed by the assassination of her husband, while the rapidly failing health of the neglected and unhappy duchess seemed to promise the fulfilment of her ambitious hopes, and there only remained a son to be procured by some means or other, fair or foul. Since the birth of her daughter Pelegrina, dissipation had made considerable inroads on her constitution, and there seemed little chance of her hopes being fulfilled, therefore she resorted to subtilty and fraud, shrinking from no measure which might ensure success.

The project had been ripening for some time in her mind. She had marked out the agents, whose assistance it would be necessary to have, assigning to each individual his or her part, while the entire scheme was entrusted but to *one*, the attendant and confidant of Bianca, Joanna Santi, who was to arrange and conduct the whole affair. Santi selected several Florentine women, and at the close of the year 1575 everything was in train for this prodigious and impudent fraud on the loving credulity of a weak man. A report was circulated that the favourite was pregnant, and so admirably did she act her part, that no one doubted it, while Francesco was in a transport of delight.

The following account is given, by an old writer, of the affair. "August 29th, 1576, one of the women marked by the confidant

was delivered of a son, and the mother with the child conveyed to a house belonging to Bianca. Santi, making the woman a visit, took the infant, under pretence of showing it to some person in an adjoining room, from its mother, and, in the night, had it secretly conveyed to the palace of Bianca, to be produced as occasion should serve. The crafty Venetian had acted through the day the part of a woman expecting momentarily to become a mother ; and the duke, full of anxiety, quitted not the room for a moment, till, at length, exhausted by fatigue and watching, the night being far advanced, he was prevailed on to retire, and to leave his beloved mistress with her nurse and attendants. Bianca contrived, on some pretence, to rid herself for a few moments of the physician, who waited in her chamber, and who seems not to have been in the plot ; and in the interval, surrounded only by her confidential friends, pretended to have brought forth a son. Francesco, who had just laid down to repose, hastened, on the joyful intelligence, to the chamber of his mistress, from whose arms he received the boy, which he acknowledged as his own ; in compliment to Saint Anthony, whom he believed had been propitious to the prayers of Bianca, the child received from the duke the name of Antonio."

The fraud was successful. Now mark the result, the fate of the poor wretches, the dupes and accomplices of the grasping ambition of a merciless woman. Naturally, after a while, the Venetian sought to rid herself of the witnesses of her falsehood. The wet nurse, with a waiting-woman who knew part of the secret, were flung into the Arno ; the real mother, ignorant of the fate of her baby, was conveyed to Bologna by an agent in the pay of Bianca. This man some years after, when at the point of death, told her the secret, and warned her to be mindful of her own safety. In terror of her life, she wandered through Italy, under a feigned name for twelve years ; and after Bianca's death, when confessing, revealed the whole transaction to a Bolognese priest whose interest she begged with Francesco's successor, to enable her to return to Florence.

The confidant and principal agent, Santi, about a year after the birth of the child was sent to Bologna, and was assaulted by ruffians, on her passage over the Apennines, from whom she received several wounds. Notwithstanding her injuries she reached Bologna alive, and in revenge made an authentic

declaration of the fraud, of the horrible fate which had overtaken those who had been employed it, and of her belief that her own murder had been intended. This deposition of Santi's was sent to the Cardinal, Ferdinando, who made no present use of it, for political reasons, but put it away carefully for future use if necessary.

Doubts of the deception practised, however, were whispered in the grand duke's ear, by the physician who had attended her and others, but Francesco appeared to give no credit to the tale, and publicly acknowledged the little Antonio as his son, while Bianca omitted nothing that might tend to endear the boy to his reputed father. She did not long remain in ignorance of the stories of her fraud which had been told to her lover, and fearing that eventually the truth would come out, some years afterwards she had the audacity to confess the whole affair to the duke. "Thus was the secret disclosed that had cost so many precautions and so much blood."

She managed by her adroitness to preserve the affections of the infatuated prince, who still continued to own the child in public.

To the depositions of the real mother, and the confidant, as to this singular transaction, were added the testimony of Pietro Capello, the physician who attended her, the confession of Bianca, and the subsequent communication of Francesco to his confessor, all of which are authenticated facts. Ferdinando preserved a discreet silence in this matter, which so nearly concerned his interests, perhaps because of the enmity that existed between him and his brother, or it might be in remembrance of Bianca's good offices, and her ascendancy over the Grand-duke.

Since the birth of Antonio, the Grand-duchess Joanna had constantly appealed to Maximilian II., her brother, and he and another brother, the Arch-duke Ferdinand, interested themselves in her unhappy situation, Ferdinand menacing Francesco, saying he would avenge his sister, when the rupture between the states, which seemed imminent, was avoided by the death of Maximilian. His successor, Rudolph, was more inclined to keep on good terms with the Grand-duke than to quarrel with him.

An event happened in 1577, which promised to bring happiness to Joanna; the Grand-duchess gave birth to a son, presenting her husband with the male heir he had so long and

so ardently desired. Don Filippo de Medici, as this atom was called, almost from the hour of birth, seemed to heal the breach between his parents, while the Florentines were in triumph, and clamoured loudly for the disgrace and removal of the mistress, who, to avoid more bitter mortifications, wisely withdrew to a villa she had near Bologna, pretending to give up her relations with the Duke. Her absence only added fuel to the flame of her lover's passion. He missed her lovely face, her habitual cheerfulness and complaisant tenderness, and languished for her society, which at times even then he secretly enjoyed, while he hated the restraint the situation of his wife and the wishes of his subjects imposed upon him.

Bianca returned to Florence the following year, and by her *exterior* prudence and retired mode of life, made the Duchess think that all was at an end between the Venetian and her husband, which made her treat her beautiful rival with less acrimony and indulge in hopes of winning Francesco's affection.

But alas ! for the mutability of human hopes. This unfortunate lady was soon to be undeceived, and her grief and resentment increased.

One day encountering her husband with Bianca, she threatened her with the vengeance of Heaven, reproaching her most bitterly, and on her return to the Palace after this scene in a depressed and melancholy state, she was seized with an indisposition, which ended in her death. This catastrophe was attributed by some to poison administered to her by the Duke, but her delicate state of health and a broken heart seem quite enough to produce the effect.

Both Francesco and Bianca showed callous heartlessness on the death of the Duchess. The former at the funeral disgusted the Florentines, who had pitied and liked Joanna, by his levity and openly-shown relief, and the Venetian displayed so little delicacy as to view the burial cavalcade from her window ; and all present saw the Duke look up and salute her as he passed, while from the interment he went straight to an entertainment at her house.

"Give me your hand," said Bianca, to the confidant who brought her the news of the Duchess's death, "it will now be in my power to make your fortune ; I have the promise of the Duke to become his wife—my views are all accomplished."

These hopes grew, as Francesco refused to enter into the alliances proposed to him by the Cardinal Ferdinando, telling his brother that "He had already sufficiently sacrificed to the interest of his family, and that he had determined never again to barter his liberty for matrimonial fetters."

However, after a struggle between duty and inclination, and against the advice of his counsellors, he married her secretly on the 5th of June, 1579, the marriage ceremony being performed by a monk who was devoted to Bianca. This event was carefully concealed during the term of mourning for the Grand-duchess, but when that had expired, it was acknowledged. Cardinal Ferdinando received the intelligence with little emotion. He did not think that Bianca would be raised to the dignity of Grand-duchess; his father Cosimo had married a woman of inferior rank, Camilla Martelli, but had never thought of raising her to that rank.

In writing to a friend, he expressed himself thus on the subject:

"However, it does not follow that Bianca will be proclaimed Grand-duchess. I rather believe she will hold the same rank as did Signora Camilla."

To conciliate the Florentines, Francesco sent a splendid embassy to the Venetian Senate, begging it to confer the title of "Daughter of the Republic" upon his wife. This was a title created by the Venetians for political purposes, by which the daughters of their patricians, assuming the rank of princesses, were able to form alliances with crowned heads. Venice, being the first Italian state, its daughters took precedence of the other princesses of Italy. On 17th July, 1579, this dignity was granted, by a decree of the same senate by which she had been banished and persecuted, and at the same time her father and brother were made Knights of the Stola d'Oro, and Francesco's ambassadors returned to Florence laden with honours, and a letter from the Doge, in which he congratulated the Duke upon his nuptials, telling him that "We have this day unanimously in council, created and proclaimed Bianca Capello, Grand-duchess of Tuscany, Daughter of the Republic."

The fact of the Doge giving Bianca the title of Grand-

duchess in his letter, determined Francesco on the elevation of his wife, and the double ceremony of the coronation of his consort as Daughter of the Republic, and her presentation as Grand-duchess was performed on the same day, 13th October 1579, with solemn pomp, the Venetian Republic sending a splendid embassy, her uncle, the patriarch of Aquileia, giving the benediction to the royal pair, while Micheli Fiepolo read the decree of the senate, and placed the ducal crown on her brow. Amongst other honours, she was declared Queen of Chypre.

The Cardinal could not conceal his disgust at the elevation of Bianca, his interests were so nearly involved. Don Filippo, Joanna's son, was in a precarious and feeble state of health, Ferdinando was next in succession. His hopes would be extinguished if Bianca bore a son, and failing this he dreaded those arts and intrigues of which she had already given a specimen. He would not go to Florence to assist at the coronation, but sent two of his chamberlains instead, which slight to his beloved wife Francesco resented, withdrawing from his brother all correspondence, and Ferdinando declared his intention of never visiting Florence again. Thus once more were the Medici divided.

Bianca, however, too clever a woman not to smother her own feelings when policy dictated it, never rested until she had effected a reconciliation between the brothers, the Cardinal bestowing on her the title of "the restorer of the family peace." Though the Florentines were gratified at the union of the brothers they still regarded the Grand-Duchess with dislike and mistrust, and the most absurd tales were circulated about her. It was said that at her magnificent villa at Pratolino, where she generally resided, most horrible cruelties were practised. It was known by the name of *Villa Tribolina*, and after her death a room was shown called the *Stillatoio* of Bianca, where it was gravely asserted, that from the fat distilling from infants suspended over boiling water, cosmetics were prepared for the preservation of her beauty.

The Cardinal, though gratified at the kind offices of the Grand-Duchess, and pleased at her efforts for the advancement of the family, still seems to have distrusted her, and after the death of Don Filippo, in 1582, seems to have considered himself justified in adopting measures calculated to defeat any plot she

might concoct, and entreated his brother Don Pietro to come from Spain and marry. His jealousy increased in 1583, when Francesco declared Don Antonio his legitimate son. German guards were assigned to him, and from many of the Florentines, who regarded him as the next in succession, he received honours due to the second person in the state. Bianca by her clever management disarmed his displeasure, and by conferring benefits on his family awakened his gratitude, while the skill she displayed in bringing about the marriages of two princesses of the house of Medici, with Don Cæsar d'Este of Ferrara, and the son of the Duke of Mantua, pleased him greatly. The friendship of the brothers did not last long, the harmony of the Medici family, always precarious, was again interrupted by the Cardinal's distrust of Bianca, which gave great offence to Francesco, and it was long before the Grand-duchess, with all her tact and cleverness, could restore peace between them. The Duke promised to forget the past, and receive the overtures of his brother, on the condition that the Cardinal should pay a visit to them at Florence.

Accordingly in the October of 1587, Ferdinando made a voyage to Florence, and was received by the Duke and Duchess with every sign of friendship and affection. Bianca repaired, with her husband and brother-in-law, to *Poggio-à-Cajano*, a hunting-box of the Duke's, where the Duchess occupied herself solely in preparing amusements for the Cardinal, and where every minute was given up to luxurious pleasures.

But the serenity of the visit received a sudden interruption. On the 13th of October Ferdinando dined with his brother and sister-in-law, and towards the end of the repast Francesco was seized with horrible pains, and what appeared to be an intermittent fever, which increased hourly, while his strength sank. Feeling that his end was nigh, he named the Cardinal his successor, recommended to him his wife and reputed son, Don Antonio, delivered to him the plans of his fortresses, and succumbed ere long to the violence it was supposed, of poison, at forty years of age; while Bianca, who had sickened almost at the same time of the same disorder, expired nineteen hours after the death of her husband, in her forty-fifth year.

Who was the author of this frightful catastrophe is a historical problem which has not yet been resolved, but suspicion not un-

naturally rested on Ferdinando, as he was the person most interested, and most likely to benefit by their deaths. The body of the Duke was taken to Florence, and deposited in the family vault, after a private ceremony. Two days later the remains of the Duchess were brought to the city, and were met by the clergy of St. Lorenzo, bearing tapers in their hands, and by the guard of German lance-bearers, and the household of the late Duke, at the gate, while all the streets through which the procession passed were brilliantly lighted up. The body was opened, by order of the Cardinal, in the presence of Don Antonio, the daughter and son-in-law of Bianca, and death was declared to have been the result of dropsy.

After the examination, it was removed to the church of St. Lorenzo. But Ferdinando, when questioned respecting its exhibition in public, adorned with the ducal coronet, said, "No, she has worn the crown long enough." And he refused to allow it to be interred in the family vault of the Medici; so the remains were deposited under the church of St. Lorenzo, while he ordered her escutcheon to be removed from public buildings, and that of Donna Joanna of Austria to replace it.

The premature death of the Duke and Duchess gave rise to various reports, and some writers assert that Bianca meant to poison the Cardinal by a tart, which she offered him at dinner, and which he refused suspecting her design, upon which the Grand-Duke reproaching his brother for his distrust, unwarily tasted it, and Bianca, unable to prevent the fate of her consort, determined to share it, swallowing the remainder of the confection. Others say the Cardinal alone was the author of the catastrophe, would not allow any assistance to be given to his victims, insulting them while in their expiring agonies.

One writer says :

"On a survey of the life of Bianca Capello, whatever may be thought of the qualities of her heart, which it must be confessed are doubtful, it is impossible not to be struck with the powers of her mind, by which, amidst innumerable obstacles, she maintained undiminished, through life, that ascendancy which her personal charms had first given her over the affections of a capricious prince. She was fitted to take part in political intrigues, to succeed in courts, and rise to the pinnacle of power, but, stained with cruelty, and debased by falsehood, if her talents excite

admiration, they produce no esteem, and while her accomplishments dazzle the mind, they fail to interest the heart."

She was of majestic stature, eloquent, clever, insinuating, but her beauty was impaired at an early age from ill-health, and of the many portraits that remain of her there is not one which represents her in the bloom of her youthful beauty. They were all taken after she became Grand-Duchess, when her charms had somewhat faded.

There are several in the *Pallazzo Pitti* at Florence, one, said to be the best, in the *Pallazzo Capara* at Bologna, and a beautiful portrait of her in the ducal robes used to be preserved in the palace of the Capelli at Padua.

A Unique Instance.

"GIVE up mental work entirely, leave London at once, and come to me again this day month."

Hugh Ogilvie smiled a little at the brusque, decisive tones, and then the weary, harassed look settled down once more on his pale face.

"The fact is——" he began, and then stopped irresolutely.

"The fact is," finished Dr. Anson, "rest is to you the most disagreeable medicine I could prescribe, eh?"

"Well, yes, it is—just now. It seems to me," slowly, "that unless I have my work to think about——" he stopped again, looking down in frowning perplexity.

"Your fancies will get hold of you more than ever? No doubt, they will, at first; but mark me, Mr. Ogilvie, unless you at once and entirely cease from mental work, and seek a fresh atmosphere, the results will be most serious—most disastrous."

There was silence for a few moments.

"This vague presentiment, these disturbing dreams, and all the nervous etceteras you have not described, but which I know you experience, are all the perfectly natural and commonplace results of overwork. You are a barrister in fairly good practice—that would be enough for most men—besides this, you write for a dozen journals, and have been bitten also by the worst of manias—the social reform pamphleteering mania. Then on the top of all this comes another excitement, another anxiety, as I imagine, of a particularly painful nature." He paused a moment and in that pause Dallas Greenwood's face passed before Hugh Ogilvie's eyes, as he sat there staring down on the thick carpet—passed in all its gentle sweetness and high-bred beauty—and he scarcely heard the concluding words in the thin, cold voice. "And the inevitable end is breakdown of the nervous system, which has been so foolishly overstrained."

There was another pause, but as Mr. Ogilvie was silent, nothing was to be done but to scrawl the usual hieroglyphics on a card and bring the interview to a close, and then Hugh went out into the square again, and turned homewards.

He walked slowly, his head bent, his hat drawn over his eyes, utterly unconscious of the half-curious, half-pitying glances cast upon him from time to time by the less busy passers-by, who, from remarking that his was an unusually handsome face, went on to think that it was strangely white and haggard and overwrought—the face, indeed, of a man on the verge of a very dangerous illness.

“Another anxiety of a particularly painful nature!” He laughed shortly as the words came back to him, and it was then that he put his hand up and drew his hat down over his eyes, for they were burning and smarting enough without the blazing sun adding its quota.

Her last little note lay in his pocket-book, already worn with frequent handling, though it was but a month old; he knew it by heart, knew every turn of the pretty, undecided writing, from the beginning, “Dear Mr. Ogilvie,” to its signature, “Yours sincerely, Dallas Greenwood.”

Sincerely. And he *loved* her so sincerely, so passionately, so tenderly!

That little note was a constant reproach to him; he ceaselessly cursed his selfish folly in upsetting the calm, affectionate intercourse which had existed between them for so long. It had been “Hugh” and “Dallas,” till that evening, just a month ago, when he startled her by declaring his love with such burning eagerness, that she had been overwhelmed and almost frightened—and had promised tremblingly to think about it—to write—and had written!

He had not seen her since, for almost immediately she had gone away on a long visit to friends in Scotland, but he had tried to undo the mischief by writing to her in the old tone of friendliness, and asking her to forget his folly. “Never think of it,” he wrote, “and never think of me but as your old friend Hugh. *Mr.* Ogilvie is my father.” And the sending of that letter had comforted him, and re-assured her, not a little.

He was thinking it all over as he walked back to his chambers in Benchers’ Avenue that day, and when he reached his room, he took that note out, and read it through again. Well, it was over, she would forget, and when they met again——”

That vague presentiment, that inexplicable foreboding, which

had shadowed him of late, crept stealthily over him, as he stood there in the bright sunlight, and the thought in his mind was checked strangely. He looked up, half afraid for a moment, as though another presence was in the room unknown to him, and then folded up the letter and put it away quickly, with a sudden resolve to stamp out these fancies which were growing upon him—to be a man, and battle manfully with himself.

“When we meet,” he said, speaking aloud in his determination to complete that thought, “she will have no cause for uneasiness, at least, she will be able to trust me—thank God.” And then he went to work vigorously, for there was much to be done before evening, when he went to dine with an old schoolfellow at the Holborn. They went to the theatre afterwards, and it was not until they were returning that Hugh suddenly remembered he had not yet decided where to go on the morrow.

Fulke Barry burst out laughing when he heard.

“How eminently characteristic, as you would say yourself! Go to London Bridge, and make your choice from the time-tables. But, surely, old man, you have some notion?”

“Not the faintest. I hate most country places, except a corner in Cornwall nobody knows of but myself, but that’s too far. I want to be within the pale of civilisation—I mean London.”

“Then fall back on my idea.”

And then they said good-night, and Hugh walked back by himself, through the quiet moonlit streets—thinking about her.

He was very tired and utterly disinclined for exertion of any kind, but, nevertheless, set himself to study maps and time-tables with no definite result at 1.30 a.m., except a feverish headache. He went to bed at last, still thinking vexedly of his journey, and half-resolved to go to Cornwall after all, and with the thought came a quieting vision of the quaint, sleepy village he knew, with its cool depths of greenery, and the little brawling brook which ran through it—a soothing vision, which remained with him almost till he slept. But it left him then, for he had a strange and terrible dream.

A terrible dream.

He was alone—Merciful God, how terrible!—he was alone in thick darkness in a wood. And he was there for some dread

purpose, the very thought of which chilled his blood, though as yet he knew not what it was. Through that dense blackness, Something was coming to him—Something unspeakably hideous, from which, with choking terror, he turned to flee, but could not move his feet, though his strained heart almost burst in the effort.

The struggle half woke him, and he grasped the bedclothes in a frantic endeavour to free himself, dimly conscious that this was but an evil dream—but they broke into rotten twigs in his hands.

And while he stood thus paralysed, gazing into the darkness, the face and figure of a woman became dimly outlined before him.

A dead woman. But with open eyes, glazed and hard, which stared a ghastly story into his.

In his dream he almost died as he looked and felt that his own face too was stiffening—darkening——

A strange half twilight had gradually encompassed the figure; he saw clearly every feature, every detail of the dress, saw too—ah cruelty!—why the poor face was so blackened and convulsed, though in agony he tried to turn away his eyes—for she had moved—had put up her hands—had laid bare those discoloured bruises on her throat——

And he recognized with a sudden flash a rare old-fashioned silver necklace which he had given Dallas Greenwood on her last birthday.

Recognized it with an exclamation of horror, of incredulity, which died upon his lips as this woman, bending forward, uttered a name—and he awoke with that name upon his lips and the cold dews of agony running down his face——

“Barnwood.”

A few hours later, as Hugh Ogilvie was sitting listlessly over breakfast, hasty steps sounded upon the stairs, and after a rapid knock, Fulke Barry entered, with a radiant face.

“Look here, Ogilvie,” he began at once, shaking hands, “have you settled where to go yet?”

“Not a bit of it, just where I was last night.”

“Well then, what do you say to the governor’s place in

Hampshire ? he's only just bought it you know, but it's furnished and all that, and Mrs. Behn's there, an awfully jolly old soul, and there's heaps of books knocking about, and altogether it's not a bad shanty, and the old chap said he'd be delighted if you would go—now just decide sensibly ! ”

“ But,” began Hugh.

“ There aren't any buts,” Mr. Barry interrupted ; “ the governor's off to Scotland by the 10.50 and I must get back in time—do be agreeable now, old man, just for once ! ”

“ I shall be only too glad ; it's most awfully good——”

“ Oh, do dry up, Mrs. Behn is in an awful funk because the governor isn't going down after all, and she has everything on its hind legs to receive him ; she will welcome you as specially sent by Providence to eat her pies ! I was a duffer not to think of it last night. Good-bye, the 2.40 from Waterloo is the best to go by—I'll wire to Mrs. Behn, take care of yourself.”

He was gone, flying downstairs, as he shouted his last exhortation, leaving Hugh relieved, grateful, yet singularly and unaccountably depressed.

He went back to the breakfast-table slowly and thoughtfully, and was about to unfold his newspaper when it suddenly struck him that he knew neither the name of the station nor of the house. He was unreasonably vexed with himself for forgetting to ask, and with Barry for not remembering to say, and the ludicrous element in the situation did not strike him at first, though he smiled as he dispatched a telegram to his friend.

“ Hampshire rather vague address ; please wire back name of station and house.”

He had some time to wait for the reply, for it took Barry half-an-hour to get home, and another twenty minutes passed before it came ; he spent that time in a state of impatient irritability which he could not control ; pacing backwards and forwards in his sitting-room, restlessly fidgeting with the ornaments on his mantel-piece, trying to fix his attention on the newspaper, but flinging it down in disgust. An unreasonable, an almost fearful expectation was upon him—of what he knew not, but it increased with every moment, till, when the telegram did come, his trembling fingers could scarcely tear it open.

It was very short.

"Sorry for omission, name of station and house the same.
—Barnwood."

A fly met Hugh Ogilvie at Barnwood Station and conveyed him to the house, a long, low building, covered with roses, clematis and creepers, on which his tired eyes rested gratefully ; it was late in the afternoon too, and a cool little breeze had sprung up and was stirring the leaves musically, so that altogether his first impressions of the place were most refreshing and soothing. Mrs. Behn, a comely, comfortable little woman, met him in the hall, and respectfully introducing herself, led the way into a quaint, light-tinted, three-cornered room, where tea was laid on a table by the window which opened into the flower garden. He "took" to it all at a glance, and sat down with a sigh of satisfaction, able even to burst out laughing as a ridiculous recollection of Fulke's speech about the pies came back to him, when one emitting a delicious aroma was actually put upon the table ; for Mrs. Behn, upon whom his hollow eyes and thin cheeks had made a profound impression, had straightway determined to comfort his soul with savoury meats.

He rambled about the garden after tea, taking quiet pleasure in its silence and old-fashioned sweetness, and at last, leaning over a gate which led into a great wide cornfield at one side, he thought that now was the time, in this peaceful, wholesome solitude, to think out that—coincidence.

He would think reasonably and collectedly—and would put to rest for ever those senseless fancies, that indefinable expectation——

Ah, thickly throbbing heart ! He dropped his head upon his folded arms, and stood there motionless.

The golden-lighted landscape had become grey and shadowy when he straightened himself again and walked back slowly to the house.

Mrs. Behn was superintending the laying of supper in the pretty parlour, and passing him in the hall as he was preparing to go upstairs, caught sight of his face, and uttering an exclamation, hurried forward.

"You are ill, sir?" she said, putting her hand upon his arm and looking up at him concernedly.

He paused for a moment before answering, and when he spoke his voice sounded to her strangely calm; there was a tone in it which somehow terrified her.

"I am not very well and will go to my room; kindly do not trouble about supper," and as he saw that she still looked alarmed, 'pray do not be uneasy, I shall be well to-morrow,' and she watched him go upstairs, and heard him shut and lock his door.

Face to face with the night.

Lying back in an armchair by the open window, with the blessed night breeze cooling that hot and throbbing brow; nerving himself to look back into that dead face which hung over him, into those unsleeping eyes, *and to understand and to obey the mute command they brought.*

Mrs. Behn, listening anxiously at the door before retiring for the night, heard no sound, and hoped he was asleep, and went to bed herself, thinking of him pityingly.

It was nearly one o'clock when Hugh Ogilvie stood up, and deliberately shutting down the window, opened his door and went downstairs.

The bolts of the front door were easily drawn back, and closing it quietly behind him, he went out into the night.

CHAPTER II.

It was very dark.

He stood still for a moment at the gate, and put his hand to his head vaguely, then turned to the left. The road was very steep and in bad repair, and from time to time he stumbled, but went on as scarcely conscious of it, till he reached the top of the hill. Till then the hedges, tall and thick, had lined the way on either side, but now they became thinner, broken and straggling, and he could see dimly that to his left lay fields, while on the right tall trees rose up, at intervals at first, then thickly.

This would be the wood.

Leaning against the hedge, drawing his breath painfully, his lips parched—but still resolute.

And entered the wood. With arms outstretched felt his way between the low-spreading branches, and when the livid face faded from before him, knew that his quest was ended——

And suddenly came back to himself.

Madman! to be thus mastered by his evil imagination—to let a dream——

Oh, God in Heaven! what was *this* on which he stumbled? Oh, that this might be a dream! Kneeling down, wildly feeling with his hands, till they touched—oh, agony of horror!—that upturned, clay-cold face!

He sprang to his feet again and uttered a cry so wild and hoarse that it echoed in his own brain for ever after—"Light—light—light!" The horror of thick darkness he had dreamed of was worse ten thousand-fold in reality—he struck match after match wildly, till at last one burned, and holding it closely to the ground he gazed—the weak flame flickered for an instant over the poor tortured face, the staring eyes, glanced on the silver of the necklace—and went out——

He tried to cry aloud again, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, a convulsive shudder darted through his frame, something snapped in his brain, and he tore his way back through the trees, leapt the hedge and bounded down the road in a mad frenzy of terror, through the crowd of dead faces pressing upon him from every side—till there was a stumble, and a stifled sob—and he was lying prone upon his face, outside the gates of Barnwood.

Weeks passed before Hugh Ogilvie woke to rational contemplation of things around him, weeks during which it was doubtful if that turn for the better would ever come, but when at length the fluctuations between delirium and unconscious stupor ceased, recovery became a mere question of time and careful nursing.

His illness surprised no one who had seen him during that last week in London; men said that he was "in" for brain fever for a dead certainty, and Fulke Barry sitting by him during his convalescence, frankly expressed his opinion.

"You looked most awfully bad that last morning," he said.

"When I got back to the governor I said, 'if that chap doesn't look out, his roof will come off'! so Mrs. Behn's letter did not surprise me much; you won her heart completely; do you know what she called you to me when I came? 'that dear beautiful young gentleman!'" and Hugh laughed weakly.

No one knew the final cause which had precipitated his illness; his incoherent ravings of the wood and the woman were too disconnected to suggest anything to his nurses, and when he remembered it all himself, he carefully avoided all mention of that last night. He waited patiently to be told what he knew he must one day hear, but it was a long time coming; not until he was well enough to come downstairs without assistance, and sit in the light parlour, did Mrs. Behn at length impart a history of the crime with which England was ringing.

Later in the day on which he had been taken ill, two labourers found the dead body of a woman in the wood; at the inquest which followed it had been identified as that of Katharine Wilson, the daughter of a small farmer in the neighbourhood, who had left her home some time previously and had not since been heard of; the cause of death was evident, but how accomplished there was no evidence to show, though from the marks upon the neck, it was supposed that a necklace of some kind had been twisted round; *no such necklace, however, had been found*, and no string or handkerchief of any kind; it was therefore supposed that the murderer had removed it, fearing detection by its means. Absolutely nothing could be ascertained of the girl's life after she left home, though a wedding ring on her finger pointed to the fact that she was married, and the result of the inquiry was, that a verdict of wilful murder was returned against a person, or persons, unknown.

The effects of this incident in his life upon Hugh Ogilvie, were what might have been expected; it aged him considerably; he was easily knocked up, was utterly incapable of his former hard work, though he could still get through an immense amount in one of his fits of nervous energy, and though he utterly rejected the preposterous notion that the necklet he had given Dallas was the same on which his match had flickered in the wood, he was yet unable to disassociate the idea from his thoughts of the crime. It would have been wiser perhaps had

he imparted the whole story of his dream and its consequences to some healthy minded friend, and indeed he longed to do so sometimes, but shrank from the inevitable questioning, and the possible ridicule, to which he would be submitted. Instinctively he knew that more was yet to follow, and his first conscious thought each morning as he woke was "Will it be to-day?"

It was not until late in the October of that year that he first heard of Dallas Greenwood's engagement.

He had looked in at Mrs. Hay's "At Home," and Flora Hay, the good-natured talkative daughter of the house, was his informant.

"It's really quite an old affair," she said, talking so fast that she did not notice how deadly pale her listener had become, "but it has only just been announced—why there was any delay at all I'm sure I don't know; he's awfully rich—do you know him at all?—a Captain Kingston, none of us had ever heard of him before, he has been in India for years, came back in April, I think it was, but only went about a little, and met Dallas in the country."

"Indeed?"

"They are to be married in the spring and I'm to be a bridesmaid—wasn't it sweet of Dallas to ask me? and then they go back to India."

"To India?"

"Yes, the captain has got to be there in October."

And then someone else claimed Miss Hay's attention, and Hugh got away unobserved, and shut himself into his rooms with his own thoughts.

It was singular that not once that winter did those two meet, till just before Christmas, and then they met at Barnwood.

He had been urgently invited by the Barrys to spend the festive week with them, and at first had no thought of acceptance in his mind, loathing as he did the very name of the place, for ever associated in his mind as it was with suffering and death. But this very horror and shrinking finally made him accept in a fit of self-contempt, when he jeered at himself and his fancies, and resolved to master them, and he waited for the day of his arrival there in a restlessly excited frame of mind, apparent enough to those about him, who remarked also a singular tinge

of defiance in his manner, utterly at variance with his usual quiet courtesy.

But it was not till the very moment of his crossing the threshold of Barnwood, that with lightning intuition, he knew he ought never to have come, ought even now to make an excuse and go away as soon as might be, and as that last thought passed through his mind, Mrs. Barry came out into the hall, and behind her, with welcoming hands outstretched and shining kindly eyes, came Dallas.

The meeting was over in a moment, and he was talking to Mrs. Barry of his journey down, and she was scolding him gently for looking overworked, all quite naturally and simply—and yet—it would have been better to go.

"We are a pretty big party," Dallas was saying, "the Musgraves, and Mrs. Bird, and two or three of Fulke's friends, whom I don't know, and Mr. Gundry, and some more are coming to-morrow—we'll fill every corner."

"But isn't it tiresome about the General?" Mrs. Barry said, vexedly. "He couldn't come down by this train, and has to wait for the wretched slow one that doesn't get in till midnight, and I firmly believe it's going to snow heavily."

"My dearest mother," Fulke remonstrated with laughing eyes, "it has about as much notion of snowing as it has of thundering."

"Well, it's cold enough for it, at any rate," his mother answered, shivering. "Come and have some tea, Hugh—there's nobody in the drawing-room; we are having dinner early, and they are dressing."

"And Captain Kingston?" he asked, with a nervous smile, as he followed her into the drawing-room.

"He comes to-morrow evening; have you met him?"

"No."

"Dallas is a very sweet girl," Mrs. Barry said confidentially, as she poured out tea, "and is utterly in love with him and he with her, but somehow I don't feel satisfied with the match, and neither does Fulke."

"Why not?"

"Well, for one thing, Fulke doesn't like him, and you know how clever he is about reading character, dear boy, and then I myself never feel *quite* comfortable talking to him, though the General says it's all nonsense, and only my imagination."

"How do you mean quite?"

"It always seems to me—of course this is between ourselves, I talk to you just as I would to Fulke, Hugh—it seems to me that he is always thinking of something painful; he looks at one in an absent sort of way, and then a look comes into his eyes that makes one creep—a look of remorse, I was going to say," Mrs. Barry finished, half-apologetically. "I'm afraid, Hugh, you'll think me a very foolish old woman."

"What does Fulke say?"

He was leaning forward, with his elbows on his knees, slowly stirring the tea she had given him; in the hall a laughing dispute about the weather signs was going on.

"He says that Captain Kingston always looks on his guard—you know what he means, always expecting——"

"Yes."

They were silent for a little, his face, still in shadow, was turned to the fire, and troubled.

"You see, Hugh, I have known Dallas ever since she was a little thing, and love her almost like my own, and know how absolutely she believes in and is guided by those whom she loves, and that's why I feel so—so anxious that there should be no mistake."

"Yes."

"But, after all," sighing, "I suppose her own heart knows best, and as I said before, I'm only a foolish old woman, and there's no doubt that it is a love match on both sides." And Dallas coming in at that moment, the talk turned to the General and the business which had taken him to London, and Hugh had only to listen and put in a word now and then, watching, out of that shadow in which he sat, the swiftly changing expressions on her face.

He had not been following their conversation closely, and for the moment was wondering why her eyes had suddenly brightened and deepened tenderly, when she turned to him eagerly.

"And oh, Hugh, I had almost forgotten to tell you—guess what Gerald is going to bring down with him?"

He shook his head, and she did not notice how pained was the smile.

"Do you remember the Indian necklace you gave me last

birthday? Well, Gerald took it to London ever so long ago to have it made smaller—you remember how much too large it was? Well, it came back, but somehow, I forget how, before Gerald sent it on to me it got crushed, and two of the segments were quite broken off, so he had to send it back again——”

Darkness. The light had left his eyes—the girl's voice sounded miles away——

It was lying at his feet——

“and that's why Gerald could not come down to-day, he wanted to bring it himself.”

Dead silence. Mrs. Barry wondered a little, and Dallas suddenly recollected herself with a hot flush—how thoughtless she had been to speak to *him* about—Gerald; but his manner had been so natural, so affectionate and brotherly as in the old days, that she had almost forgotten in her great happiness that once he had hoped to be to her what Gerald Kingston was.

She turned, that flush still burning on her cheeks, to ask Mrs. Barry some trivial question that came to her tongue first, and Hugh rose to go; he moved the chairs out of his way a little awkwardly and noisily as it seemed to his hostess, and found some difficulty in opening the door. Fulke was in the hall, manipulating a dog-collar with the assistance of a groom.

“Going upstairs?” he interrogated without turning his head. “You've got the same room you had before—pleasant recollections!”

He held by the bannister going up, as one who cannot see clearly, and before entering stood for a moment in the doorway of that room looking in, and the look in his eyes was such as we see in the eyes of an animal caught in the toils.

For he knew this was the beginning of the end.

Contrary to Mrs. Barry's prediction, rain instead of snow came in the night, and poured down steadily all next day, with the inevitable result that she felt overwhelmed by her responsibilities as hostess, and the guests lounged about the house trying not to look bored, and inwardly regretting London fascinations dismally.

The morning was bad, but the afternoon was worse, and at last in desperation some of the men went out walking in water-proofs, preferring that to the melancholy atmosphere of the house, and of these Hugh Ogilvie was one. He went no farther than the garden, however, at first walking in the shrubbery, but as the crackling of the twigs under his feet became intolerable, pacing backwards and forwards a walk at some distance from the house, and thinking—thinking, with a strange sad intensity, of his life, his ambitions.

As the dusk gathered and the windows of the house lit up, the men returned from their walk, and the women flocked back into the pretty drawing-room and waited for tea, hoping that things would be more cheerful now, but the solitary figure under the dripping trees still paced to and fro with sunken head—thinking—as a man thinks who is under sentence of death.

The depression which Mrs. Barry's guests had so painfully experienced that day did not disperse with lights and the tea-kettle—on the contrary, it increased. No one was in their usual spirits, not even Fulke, who, rarely unsociable, now felt heartily sick of everyone and longed to shut himself up for a comforting smoke. A certain feeling of expectation, too, crept into the atmosphere—a doubtful feeling, which made some of the women feel a little nervous.

Terrible pauses occurred in the conversation—silences which made themselves felt, till Mrs. Barry's hands shook as she filled the cups, and she had to steady her voice before speaking.

"Captain Kingston is almost due, is he not?" she said, smiling constrainedly. "Fulke, the carriage has gone, I suppose?"

"Yes, ages ago."

Another pause, then a little start and exclamation from Dallas, for she had upset her tea suddenly.

"Oh, I am so sorry!" There was a catch in her breath. People began to talk to each other spasmodically and appeared not to see that her eyes were full of tears and her mouth trembling.

"What's the matter with the house?" Bob Gundry muttered to a neighbour. "Has anybody been murdered here? I feel like hanging myself."

"I think we all feel like that," Mrs. Bird answered in a low voice. "I feel as if something horrible were about to happen."

"What are we all waiting here for?" someone else murmured. "Why don't we go upstairs and breathe naturally?"

"I tell you," answered Mrs. Bird, "we are waiting for something."

Dallas had slipped out of the room and taken refuge in the deserted morning-room, to recover. She was very angry with herself for being so foolish. She would confess it all to Gerald when he came, and he would tell her she was a silly little woman to cry because she spilt her tea. In spite of this scolding addressed to herself, however, the lump in her throat swelled painfully and the tears came thick and fast, and kneeling down by the sofa, her face buried in its cushions, she sobbed unrestrainedly, hysterically, trembling from head to foot. The paroxysm did not last long, but left her shaken, ready to cry at anything, and after bathing her face, she came down to the morning-room, resolved to wait there till the carriage returned, and not go back to that strange, silent, drawing-room.

She had not turned up the lamps, and the room was full of shadows, which presently, in her overwrought state of mind, became unbearable.

Had it stopped raining? No, it was still coming down mercilessly—she could hear, though it was almost too dark to see; and then she suddenly caught sight of that figure under the trees, and for a moment wondered who it could be—then with infinite compassion in her heart knew that it was Hugh.

Had he gone out there in the rain because——? Oh, no, no! she hoped he had got over that! She was not a woman to rejoice in conquests; the thought that this man still loved her filled her with distress and pity, but she could not really believe that it was so. And while she argued down the thought, the carriage lamps flashed up the drive, and in a sudden rush of gladness she forgot all else but that Gerald Kingston had come, and turning up the lamps she opened the door and stood waiting, wondering if he would know she was in here—her heart beating high.

And he did know she was there, and came. The General and Fulke had gone into the hall to receive him. Mrs. Barry remained at her tea-table. There was a general feeling in the

air that impelled people to talk in whispers. It was with real difficulty that Mrs. Bird kept up a conversation naturally, with her neighbours—but even she gave up.

"Are we going mad?" she said in a low voice to Mr. Gundry. "Why are we all so pale?"

Then the door opened, and Captain Kingston came in with Dallas and Fulke.

There was a little movement, a wave of naturalness, while mutual greetings passed. He stood in the full light of the large centre lamp, smiling down at Mrs. Barry as she asked him some trivial question about his journey; and it was as he stood thus that Hugh Ogilvie, entering the room, first saw him. Gerald Kingston turned his head, looked carelessly at him—then intently—and turning round fully, but slowly, as though moved by a power other than his own will, stood motionless, livid to the lips.

It was so marked that the words died away on the lips of those who saw—so marked that an intense silence fell upon the room, while every eye was turned upon those two in strained expectancy. And then, in a low, hoarse voice, Gerald Kingston spoke.

"I have dreamed of you," he said, "ever since the night I saw you kneeling by her in the wood."

He had dropped his face upon his hands.

The General was the first to speak.

"Come into another room," he said roughly, taking him by the arm; "for God's sake be a man!"

Two strange men were in the hall; one of them stepped forward as Kingston, with that dazed look on his face, followed General Barry out, and touching him gently, looked up meaningly.

"What's this?" The General's voice, harshly imperative, brought the guests crowding to the drawing-room door. Gerald Kingston, standing passive, seemed unconscious of what was going on.

"This gentleman must come with us," the elder of the men answered hurriedly; "he is arrested."

"What do you mean?"

"He is arrested, sir, on a charge of murder, committed in June last—Katharine Wilson."

It seemed only a moment and the hall was empty again, and the cab wheels tearing up the gravel outside.

In the drawing-room two women had fainted, but no one noticed them at first, and then suddenly Mrs. Bird cried out to someone for God's sake to look at Mr. Ogilvie.

They carried him into the library and laid him down flat on the floor, and kneeling by him Fulke put his hand upon his heart—and recoiled.

"I knew it," Bob Gundry said quietly; "if I'm not mistaken, he has been expecting death all day."

ALLEN ELLIOT.

A Romance of Belgravia.

THE clock had just struck five. In a luxuriantly-furnished drawing-room in one of the best houses in Belgrave Square, Lady Gertrude Morrison was lying back in a low chair, with a dainty tea-table at her side.

She was a tall, handsome woman, with beautiful dark eyes and hair, regular features, and full red lips. Clad in a dark velvet dress there was a certain air of dignity and stateliness about her, and she looked like a woman accustomed to rule. But there was a dissatisfied expression upon the beautiful face, and had an attentive observer been present, he would have noticed that Lady Gertrude appeared to have some secret trouble, and that she was then endeavouring to make up her mind to a decided course of action. Suddenly she rose, and ascending the stairs to her room threw a dark cloak over her and sallied forth into the damp and fog of a November evening. Passing out of the more frequented thoroughfares, she took her way along the dark and squalid streets. One could hardly imagine a greater contrast than this mysterious woman hurrying on, as if afraid of being seen, murmuring now and again the name "Laurence," and the rich and much-sought-after Lady Morrison, of London society. At last she stopped at a small and unpretentious house, and rang the bell, which, after some time, was answered by a dirty servant girl.

"Is Mr. Dranneks at home?" she enquired, and being answered in the affirmative was ushered into a shabbily-furnished little room. Almost immediately, a short, stout man entered with a low bow.

"I hear, Mr. Dranneks," Lady Gertrude began, "that you have wonderful mesmeric powers, and are able to influence any person as you wish, and also that you are giving a public display of your art on Tuesday next."

"It is quite true," Mr. Dranneks replied, rather wondering what this lady required of him.

"Well, then," she continued, "I want you to do me a slight

service, for which, I need scarcely say, you will be liberally rewarded. I am Lady Gertrude Morrison, and what I require is a very simple thing, which you can very easily arrange for me," and she put down her purse carelessly upon the table.

Mr. Dranneks' eyes glittered, and he awkwardly shuffled his feet. He was very fond of money, but he was a little anxious as to what might be required of him, and he felt rather nervous in the presence of his aristocratic visitor.

"Of course I shall do my best to oblige your ladyship," he said.

"Exactly so," she returned coldly "I had better explain what I want you to do. On Tuesday next I wish you to mesmerise Mr Laurence Kenworth ; I shall see that he is present at your entertainment, and that you shall know him. While he is under your influence, you will cause his affections to be transferred from Miss Lucy Hunt to Lady Gertrude Morrison—that is—myself."

Mr. Dranneks looked puzzled.

"Excuse me, your ladyship," he said, "but this gentleman's engagement to Miss Hunt is already announced in the *Morning Post*."

"That does not matter," she answered sharply. "Can you do what I ask ?"

"I can, of course," the little man said, with some hesitation, "but it is not a pleasant business, and if I consent to undertake it, I should like the payment to be settled first."

"Very well," she said carelessly ; "of course you understand that you keep this interview a strict secret."

"That is my way in all my dealings," Mr. Dranneks replied, with rather an uneasy laugh. Lady Gertrude then handed him a five-pound note, which he promptly received, thanked her, and put away in his purse. She then took her departure, and in less than an hour this passionate woman, with all the deadly pangs of jealousy in her heart, willing to go any lengths in her unbridled love for the man already engaged to another, was transformed into the brilliant Society lady. At the Duchess of Earthshire's dinner-party she was the gayest of the gay, and seemingly quite forgetful of the scene through which she had so lately passed.

Tuesday, the day of Mr. Dranneks' entertainment, had arrived,

and Lady Gertrude, with Mr. Kenworth and his *fiancée* Miss Lucy Hunt, both of whom she had persuaded to accompany her, appeared in good time. The hall was not so well filled as the mesmerist would have liked, but casting his eyes round he at once detected his visitor and her friends, and knew that his part of the arrangement would have to be carried out. In the first place, he mounted the platform and made a speech, chiefly about himself and his marvellous powers (during which the audience looked slightly bored), and then he opened the proceedings by requesting any one, who felt disposed, to come up and be experimented on.

"What do you say to going up, just to see what it is like?" said Lady Gertrude to Miss Hunt, a bright, golden-haired, fresh-looking girl, whose pretty face contrasted greatly with the other's dark, cold beauty.

"I should like it," returned Lucy; "it would be such a new experience. Let us go, Laurence."

"By all means," answered the fair-haired young man at her side. And the three accordingly moved up to the platform, where Lady Gertrude and the mesmerist exchanged a significant glance, as he steadily scanned their faces with the view, as he expressed it, of discovering a good "subject."

"What a disappointment," said Lucy to her friend; "we are passed over, but Laurence is more fortunate, he has been chosen."

And a strange smile flickered across her companion's face. Laurence was seated in a large chair on the platform, and Dranneks, standing before him, made a few rapid passes. Presently the subject's limbs began to stiffen and his eyes to dilate. Lady Gertrude, watching with breathless interest, saw that he was becoming powerless under the operator's influence. He made him do a few of the usual tricks while in this state, and then, bending over the inanimate form, whispered something distinctly in his ear. No one could hear what he said, but Lady Gertrude cast a triumphant glance at her unconscious rival. The mesmerist now proceeded to bring Laurence back to his senses, apparently none the worse for the experience; in fact he said he knew nothing of what had passed, and thought he had been asleep. When some other subjects had been experimented on, the entertainment was brought to a close by Dranneks assuring the audience that they had had a most

successful performance, for, as he told a friend of his when refreshing himself after the labours of the evening, "that was always his way of doing things, and there was nothing like persuading your audience into believing anything you wished."

Rather to her surprise, Lucy noticed, on the way home, that Laurence appeared to be paying an extraordinary amount of attention to her friend, and seemed quite neglectful of her. Although for the next few days she never saw Lady Gertrude, she discovered that he was with her continually, and seemed restless and unhappy during the short visits he paid his *fiancée*.

Laurence was in a strange and uncomfortable frame of mind ; he felt how dishonourably he was acting, and yet he could not help thinking how infinitely superior Lady Gertrude was to Lucy. Day by day he grew more passionately in love with her, and at last realised, against his will, that his former love was nothing to him in comparison with this lovely woman. He felt he must tell Lucy all, and break off the engagement still existing between them, and found his way to the house, knowing well the false part he had played, and yet powerless to prevent the new love that was filling his heart. Lucy was alone in the drawing-room, where he was announced.

"Well, Laurence," she said brightly, turning to him, and then as she saw his set white face, "What is the matter?"

In as few words as possible he told her all. She turned deadly pale and clutched at a chair for support, then, with a great effort, calmed herself and said, in a wonderfully quiet voice :

"Laurence, since your love is given to another, our engagement is at an end. Since the first moment I met you I have cared for no one else, and I would have made you a good wife. Fate, however, has willed otherwise, and I felt that this was coming. Let us say good-bye."

She took off her engagement ring, and with a long look at her former lover, handed it to him in silence. Laurence left the room, sick at heart, and powerless to comfort her, and as he was in the hall, he heard a despairing cry, "Oh, Laurence, my love, my love." The brave girl, when left alone, had utterly broken down. He, himself, was deeply affected by this scene, but so strong was the strange influence dominating him, that in a few short hours he had utterly forgotten Lucy's existence under Lady Gertrude's fascinations.

About a fortnight after this interview, Laurence took his way to Belgrave Square, intending that evening to know his fate. Lady Gertrude was alone in the drawing-room, the light from the shaded lamps making her face appear yet more beautiful, as she sat in a low chair by the fire. The air was heavy with the scent of flowers, and the warmth and luxury of the room appealed strongly to Laurence's senses after the damp fog of the December night.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Kenworth," said she, raising her eyes to his face. "It is lonely by myself," and the beautiful face looked very sad.

"Gertrude," Laurence began, in a tone of peculiar tenderness; he had never called her "Gertrude" before, "I have wanted to speak to you alone for several days. I have broken off my engagement with Lucy, because I found I loved another."

"And who is she?" Lady Gertrude asked softly, with the light of love shining in her large dark eyes.

"It is——"

He never told her further. A curious sensation overpowered him, his head seemed to swim, and he nearly fell from his chair. While in this semi-unconscious state, he distinctly heard a voice hissing in his ear, "Transfer your affection from Lucy Hunt to Gertrude Morrison." Like a flash of lightning, the scene of the mesmeric entertainment came before him. He had nearly forgotten all about it, but now he recognised the voice as Dranneks'. It seemed as if a veil had been suddenly lifted from his eyes, and he remembered everything that had happened to him then.

"Am I still mesmerised?" he said to himself. "What could have made Dranneks say such a curious thing? Is it possible that Gertrude can have had anything to do with it?"

Then, with a sudden inspiration, the whole plot stood revealed. A feeling of hate and loathing for the beautiful woman whose heart was full of jealousy and envy, possessed him. She was too surprised at this sudden seizure (as she thought it) of Laurence's, to collect her thoughts at once. Then her face grew white as ashes, and her eyes literally blazed.

"Did he mean me," she thought, "or has our plot failed? If Dranneks has dared to deceive me, I could kill him," and she clenched her hands in impotent fury. Recollecting herself, she

turned to Laurence and said, "Are you ill, Mr. Kenworth? What is the matter?"

He shuddered at the sound of her voice.

"I don't know what has been the matter with me," he replied, "but I am better now. Good-bye, Lady Gertrude," and, turning to shake hands with her, he caught sight of the strange expression she wore, and the white face and blazing eyes haunted him uncomfortably for many days.

Next morning the following paragraph appeared in the daily papers :

* A serious railway accident took place yesterday, near Stonecroft Junction. Owing to the fact of the pointsman falling asleep, two trains collided. The shock was frightful, and the engine-driver and many others were killed on the spot. Amongst the dead was found the body of Mr. Ezekiel Dranneks, of Mystery Hall."

When Laurence read this, he felt that the mystery of the last few weeks was explained. Improbable as it seemed, he could not but believe that the influence exercised upon him by the strange power of mesmerism, had caused him to act as he had done—to disregard all feelings of honour, to lose all power over his own actions, and to become utterly subservient to the will of another. Only by the sudden death of the mesmerist was the chain broken, the influence removed, and he had again become a free agent. A few moments longer, and he dreaded to think what he might have been led into. He went to Lucy, and laid the whole story, as he understood it, before her, and she, trusting him implicitly, forgave him all, and the past few weeks were as if they had never been. As for Lady Gertrude, her plot fallen through, her hopes blighted, there was no more wretched woman in the land.

A few weeks after Mr. Dranneks' death, there was a concert held in aid of a certain hospital, at which Lucy had promised to sing, and Laurence, of course, was amongst the audience. When her turn came, she went on to the platform, and began an old ballad, "Beware, my lord, of jealousy, it is a green-eyed monster which doth make the food it feeds on." She sang well, and was much applauded, and was going up on the stage again to

respond to an encore, when there was a sudden commotion among the audience. A lady had fainted, and Laurence, looking round, saw that it was Lady Gertrude who was being supported out of the hall. Next day, they heard that she was seriously ill, and so she continued for some weeks, until one morning she was found dead in her bed. The doctors called it heart disease, and said that her heart had always been weak, but that some great excitement or continued strain had caused it to fail so rapidly at the last. No one ever knew what the real cause had been, but doubtless the sorrow and excitement she had gone through, caused by her unrestrained love for Laurence, had brought about the end.

Lucy, who was now Laurence's wife, had nothing but pity for her sad end. "She meant no harm," she said. "She was not really wicked, and she has suffered very bitterly for all she did. After all, Laurence, her sin, if sin it was, lay in loving you too well, and surely we, who are so happy ourselves, can forgive her that."

CECIL F. FRENCH.

The Burial of the Sardine, etc.

IT was with a look of comic surprise that several Naval officers on board H.M.S. *Lapwing* accepted the invitation, "Come and see the Burial of the Sardine?" We have a window in the "Calle Real," and a box at the theatre.

At length came the laughing question: "What are you talking about?" "What a queer title!" "Burial of the sardine!"

"Well, let me explain," said I, laughing in turn. "It is a procession, a long-talked-of, much looked-forward-to procession, which takes place yearly on the night of Ash Wednesday. I am told it is not a local custom, except that the procession allows much scope in representing any event that may have 'cropped up' during the year, painted devices carried illustrating 'Town talk,' etc., each town naturally having its especial scandal, or gossip. I cannot find how the custom originated; the answer to all enquiries is, 'Oh, it has always been.' The Artisan Club are the starters of the procession, and according to the funds and originating genius of the President the whole gains or loses. The procession winds through the principal streets, then as many as *can* crowd into the theatre, the lower boxes cleared away to admit of more space. The Artisan Club has the right of the theatre for the night; it is difficult to get a box, quite a favour indeed."

Now of the procession itself. The leading feature is an immense car drawn by bullocks. The car represents a comic funeral one, and in a glass case lies a sardine in effigy. Neptune sits in state on the top of the car, ocean figures, mermen and mermaids, at its four corners. But where the procession strikes one as so curious, are the figures preceding and following it. Numbers represent the dress of Inquisitors, as worn in all its hideous stages, others again dressed in different costumes, representing heathen mythology, carrying strange devices, others in "caprice" (comic costumes) carrying lanterns covered with all kinds of representations, then came horsemen (a cavalry regiment lent by the military governor), dressed as Roman soldiers, horses caparisoned, then a military band in carnival costume, followed by all the leading

features of the carnival, the whole lighted by lamps and torches. The band at the commencement plays a funeral march, changing to a comic piece. The "Orfeons" follow also with their leader, and pause from time to time to sing. This Society consists of men only, who have their voices educated to such perfection in part music, it is difficult to realize there is no instrumental aid. The whole procession is usually wound up by a band of students from some collegiate town, dressed in their dress of black velvet, with caps and spoons, and playing stringed instruments. Nay, so varied are the costumes, Druids marched slowly by, little girls dressed as angels, gauze wings, etc., in contrast hideous masks! What wonder that one of our officers, after a pause of profound quiet, exclaimed in a clear voice, "Great Scott!" Several Spaniards were so startled by the vehemence, I was asked to explain the meaning of the expression, but found it impossible to translate!

Well, when all had slowly passed the window we hurried to the theatre. Here for this night men act only; they are the leading wits of the town, and on the whole give an admirable performance. Each year the scenes are different, but all tending to the same purport, the burying of "Comus," the advent of "Lent," and more frequently than not, skits against church rule. Upon this occasion Comus was holding high revel, when suddenly Lent appeared dressed as a Priest, a wretched specimen, picked assuredly for his leanness, face whitened, and in sepulchral tones dismissed Comus, who departed groaning. A sort of sigh passed over the theatre, and the crowds dispersed, to begin Lent in earnest. So much for the Burial of the Sardine!

Yes, Coruña is a strange place to live in, holding a curious mixture of the free-thinking, the bigoted, and ignorant, and superstitious class.

Let me tell you a little incident of the superstitious type. A few months ago, I engaged a cook, a sad-faced, shy woman, with a kind of appealing look in her eyes that rather won me to her than otherwise. Well, as days passed on, the woman's shyness seemed to increase. Dolores shrank from us, "scuttled away," (as it were), and looked ill, complained of sleepless nights, and really seemed mentally undecided whether to go or stay. At length Dolores confided in the housemaid, that every night or rather very early morning, she "heard howls, voices of spirits in agony."

"Oh!" she said, crying, "I did wrong to come to a Jew's house?" (In a former paper, I mentioned that all sects not Roman Catholics are classed as Jews! Shame upon the priests not to teach differently.) "At night the house is haunted by shrill screams and moans," continued Dolores. "I *must* go!"

Said Maria the housemaid, "Come to my room to-night, sleep with me, and should I be asleep when the howls, etc., occur, awake me." So Dolores did; now I speak in Maria's words.

"I was awake, Señora, by Dolores in a frantic state of fright, trembling violently, and as cold as ice. 'Listen,' she gasped, 'the spirits are howling again. Oh! Santa Maria, ora pro nobis!'

"I burst out laughing; what *do* you think it was, Señora? The yard watch-dogs howling at the steam whistle."

There is a calico factory near; at about five each morning (except on fête days), a whistle is blown to assemble the workers. Our *yard dogs* invariably bark and howl in unison. *These* were the spirits.

During the day Maria drew Dolores' attention to the dogs, for at stated hours for "knocking off work" and recommencing, the whistle is blown, but for a shorter time, and less shrilly. The dogs join in always, more or less.

Poor Dolores! Maria has lived several years with me, greatly, as she says, "to her gain," and her poor ignorant friend *now* looks as though a load were taken off her mind, no longer scuttles away—nay, waits about to chat with me, and says she "delights in helping me when Maria is out."

Naturally, superstition and ignorance go hand in hand; one feels more pity than contempt!

Nearly twenty-five years ago, in a far more isolated part of the world, the Island of Sardinia, we felt less surprise at the superstition engendered by priest-craft. I remember while there having rather a crotchety musical box; it "stopped short" like grandfather's clock, or went on, with a shake. Well, a new servant arrived, and in due course, dusting the room where this box was, the instrument started playing. I was alarmed by shrill screams, rushed to the spot to see the girl almost paralysed with fear. ("A heretic spirit shut up and singing!") Certainly very sweet music—an elaborate operatic air! Ah, one needs patience in these countries!

Now let us speak of a brighter subject. A kindly country custom here, that of serenading. We were spending a summer at an old and very lonely house surrounded by a wood. One day I noticed a little quiver of excitement amongst our young people, and asked why.

"Oh, mother, it is whispered 'M.' is to be serenaded on her birthday night; ten or twelve young men are coming, and you must not speak to them or follow them, it is against etiquette."

"Oh," I said, "we will wait and see."

As the night drew on, there was a tinkling sound of sweet music, guitars, mandolins, violins, etc., and footsteps pacing through the wood; the night was dark, but one or two boys carried lanterns. We opened the windows, and there stood a group that made me shiver involuntarily. They were dressed in black cloaks, black dominoes, and slouched black hats. "M." was evidently the heroine of the evening, as a few impromptu verses showed. A polite request to unmask and partake of refreshment was quietly refused by signs, and they went off in the same mysterious way. I confessed to feeling much curiosity and pretended deafness when one of our boys said, "Mother, I *will* find out!"

He followed, but away they fled, blowing out their lights, leaving "M." much fluttered as to "who *was* who?"

That same wood has a sadder memory. Our man-servant very foolishly showed positive admiration for a country girl engaged to be married; the girl's declared lover vowed vengeance. Ramon was warned, but did not heed. One lovely moonlight night we heard *savage yells* from the wood. My husband said hurriedly, "Ramon!" At the same moment a servant rushed into the room. "Señore, Ramon has been attacked, escaped in here, has rushed upstairs." My husband flew to his pistol case (he always keeps a pocket pistol with four chambers loaded). "Gone!" I heard him say in a horrified voice. I slipped out upon a balcony to listen, when I saw a half-dressed figure stealing along.

"Ramon, is that you?" I said.

"Yes," came the sobbing answer.

"Man," I called, "come in *at once*. What are you doing?"

What was he doing? Being attacked, partially stripped, and stunned by a terrible blow from a heavy knobbed stick, which

the countrymen here always carry, he vowed revenge, secured his master's pistols, and was stealing out to a spot where he hoped to meet with his foes. (For it appeared Ramon returning from the village was attacked by *four* men—the cowards!)

Thank God, I spoke; it seemed my voice "called Ramon to himself," or *what* a terrible ending there would have been, death to him and to others! I cannot describe the terrible plight Ramon was in—a sickening sight! Suffice it, many weeks passed before the ghastly head-wound was healed, and for those weeks the sight of both eyes hung in the balance. We carefully nursed him through it all. The following morning, Ramon's coat and waistcoat were found, torn to shreds, a little money he had about him gone.

My husband took the matter up, eventually causing the ring-leaders to be punished. The pleasure of our sojourn was *gone*, for the villagers forgot the many acts of kindness shown to them in the nursing of the sick, etc., and looked askance at us; we were advised not to linger late in the wood. Mounted guards patrolled to protect the consul. Friends, who were staying in the neighbourhood to be near us, were afraid to come to our house after dusk. I *shivered at shadows*, so we shortened our stay, and came into Town.

I will mention here one more country incident, that is, a peasant's funeral. The night before the interment, relations and friends collect in the room where lies the dead, the mourning is made there, cards are played, drink indulged in, and a supper partaken of, consisting of "bacalao" (dried cod) and potatoes. Before twelve a.m. a country funeral takes place, the coffin generally carried on men's shoulders. A mourner holds a black flag, men and women follow, and *howl*, the *louder* the howling the better! As a Spanish friend told me, she overheard two countrywomen describing a funeral. One said to the other, "Ah! you have a lucky throat for noise!" That expresses it. The effect of this howling is most extraordinary, men's deeper notes, women's shrill cries, then girls' and children's shriller *howls*. Isn't this Irish?

LOUISA MARY RAWSON-WALKER.

Sir Harry Gray.

By CHARLOTTE A. PRICE.

IN TWO PARTS—PART II.

LETTER VI.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.
Fairleigh Court,
August 7th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

A terrible event has happened since I last wrote to you! Sir Harry has been seized with a paralytic stroke, and lies in an unconscious state.

Olive is much upset, especially as she thinks she has been partly the cause of it; but that is an idea I cannot allow her to dwell upon. There are limits to duty, even to a father; and especially such a father as Sir Harry Gray has been.

Under *no* circumstances can I think it right, that a daughter should sacrifice herself in marriage, to extricate a father from troubles brought on by his own evil courses; or, that she should do violence to all the holiest feelings of her nature, by giving her hand to one man, while her heart is in the possession of another.

A few days ago, Sir Harry called Olive into his study, and after vainly trying, by persuasion, to induce her to consent to marry Mr. Viner, resorted to threats and intimidation, and became so violent, under her repeated refusals to comply with his wishes, that the poor girl, in a pitiable state of agitation, ran, frightened, from the room.

I applauded her resolution, and exhorted her to remain firm. Nothing but misery could result from such a marriage. The birth, position, and tastes of the couple, are all unfavourable to a lasting union; and, if Sir Harry, once a strong man, and even now possessing an iron will, has collapsed so far as to become a mere puppet in the hands of Viner, what would be the fate of a sensitive and delicate woman, when once she came completely into his power?

Hope, too, is hard to kill! Olive cannot believe that all is over between her and Colonel Bruce. All who have suffered, know how painful it is to become habituated to the knowledge that their grief is a *fact*! and, I think, the poor girl clings to the belief that she and her lover will yet be united. I trust it may be so; but the clouds are very dark overhead, and there is no appearance of the rainbow of promise.

The morning after this hurricane, Olive did not appear at breakfast. Her absence annoyed Sir Harry, who is such a stickler for regularity and punctuality, and who has no pity for any feminine weakness.

As soon as the meal was finished, I ran upstairs to Olive's room, encountering Barnes, her maid, on my way. She told me that her mistress had a headache, and was indisposed. And truly I found my poor friend in a very disconsolate and unhappy state. Her beautiful eyes were swollen with weeping, and her luxuriant hair, which hung in rich masses over her shoulders, was disordered from restlessness and want of sleep. The breakfast tray remained untouched by the side of the bed, where the maid had placed it, and Olive lay with her face buried in her hands.

I begged my friend to be calm, and not to give way to despair. Under my caresses and consoling words, she brightened up a little, and consented to drink a cup of tea. Then I bathed her poor aching eyes and head, and having darkened the room, I had the satisfaction of seeing her become more composed. After sitting with her for a while, I left her to try and obtain the sleep she so much needed, and which sweet restorer of the worn-out frame, would do more, I knew, to quiet her than anything else.

On leaving Olive's room, I passed out of the house through the hall door, which stood wide open, and sauntered over the fresh green lawn, down the terraces to the lake. I stood on its margin and watched the ripples wavering over its sun-lit surface, and drank in the refreshing breeze which blew softly in my face.

Two majestic swans sailed up to me, looking for their usual breakfast from my hands. Alas! I had forgotten the pretty creatures in my anxiety for their unhappy mistress; and after mutely appealing in vain for some time, they turned round and swam disappointed away.

Close to my side, a splendid peacock was confined in a large aviary on the lawn. I felt pity for the lonely bird, which, because he played havoc with the flowers, the gardener had condemned to solitary confinement. It seemed an instance of deprivation of freedom and intercourse with his kind, that appealed to my sympathies, and caused me to compare him with the lonely girl I had just left, who is devoid of liberty, without companions, and separated from her mate.

The grand old cedars threw their dark foliage across the velvet lawns; bright flowers gave beauty and life to the scene; indeed, there is everything in this carefully-tended place to bestow gratification and pleasure to the master of Fairleigh Court, were he but a different man. But all its beauties are lost upon Sir Harry, apparently, for he seldom visits any charming spots in his domain, or inspects the out-lying part of his estate. He leaves the care of it all to Mr. Viner, and seems quite satisfied with his oversight of the property.

As I stood gazing around, and immersed in thought, to my surprise Mr. Viner suddenly emerged from a side-walk, and came to my side.

You know that I and this *protégé* of Sir Harry's, are never *en rapport* together; I suspect the integrity of his motives, and consequently can form no lenient judgment of his actions. Besides my suspicions of his truth in the past, there are many things in his conduct, during my stay here, which have impressed me unfavourably; not to speak of the persistence with which he foists his unwelcome attentions upon my friend. Therefore, in order to avoid conversation with him, I turned my steps in the direction of the house, and gave a deaf ear to his request that I would walk through the park with him. I suspected that he was only trying to induce me to give him my company, in order that he might sound me upon my opinion of Olive's ultimate surrender to his wishes. But I was resolved to have nothing to say to him upon the subject, and continued to advance as if I were unaware of his intentions.

We had nearly reached the Court, when the butler came running towards us, breathless and frightened, and trying to tell a disconnected story, of how he had found Sir Harry lying on his study floor insensible. He begged us, in a distracted manner, to hasten to his master's assistance.

Mr. Viner ran forward, and I quickly followed. There, sure enough, was poor Sir Harry, just in the state the man had described.

Viner, who is always cool-headed in an emergency, maintained complete self-possession, and raising the prostrate form, laid it, with the butler's aid, upon the sofa.

He then rang the bell, and ordered a groom to ride instantly into Slocombe for Dr. Rugby; asking me to write a note to summon the doctor in haste, while he and the butler carried Sir Harry upstairs to his room.

I wrote to Dr. Rugby, as requested, thinking, at the same time, how often things repeat themselves in this world.

I then went to acquaint Olive with the sad news, fearing she might hear the intelligence in some sudden and unexpected way, and that it might probably affect her disastrously, in the weak state in which I had left her, but such a short time ago.

Fortunately in the present distressing aspect of affairs, there was one person in the house, experienced and trustworthy, to whom we could turn. Barnes is an old and valued servant, who has lived in the family many years. She was lady's maid to the late Lady Gray, and took charge of Olive at her death, fulfilling her duties to everybody's satisfaction. Lady Talbot valued her services so highly that, when dying, she confided Olive to her care, and besought her to render any assistance that lay in her power to smooth the troubles and difficulties which she foresaw would overshadow her niece's path. Lady Talbot felt glad to think that Olive had one true friend—though in a different sphere from her own—who would be at hand always to look after her health, and comfort her in sorrow and loneliness.

Barnes is a steady, middle-aged woman, tall and thin, with superior manners and appearance. The constant intercourse she has held with gentlewomen has refined and softened the angularities of her class. She is very quiet and reserved, and appears to be one of those people, but seldom met with, who *do* much and *say* little. I can see that she is thoroughly to be depended upon in an emergency like the present. Under her care, the sick man was soon undressed and laid in his bed.

Olive bore the news of her father's seizure with calmness, and

proceeded to dress herself, that she might be ready to receive Dr. Rugby when he came.

This unforeseen event will doubtless exert a great influence on her future life. How strangely the over-ruling hand of God can be traced in many of the incidents of our daily existence.

You may wonder that I have been able to snatch the time to write, but I have often found sleep impossible lately, and, therefore, unburden myself to you in these midnight hours.

Dr. Rugby fortunately was at home when the groom arrived with my note, and he reached the Court as soon as his horse could bring him.

He confirmed our opinion that Sir Harry has had an attack of paralysis, and ordered perfect quiet. He placed his patient under the care of Barnes, whom he knows to be fully competent to undertake the duty of nurse ; and after giving orders that he was to be summoned if any change took place, went away, and quiet now reigns over the disturbed household.

Olive is asleep, and I am, at last, feeling the effects of all the excitement and conflicting emotions of this memorable day.

How I wish that you were near me, my dear Julia ; your clear common-sense, and great practical experience, would be invaluable in such a crisis as this. I can think of no one, unless it be Mrs. Fenn, who can give any assistance to Olive, or come to her, should I not be able to remain here.

Accept my warmest love, and believe me,

Your affectionate friend,

MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER VII.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court,

August 16th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

In the midst of the gloom and sadness that rest upon this house, it is the greatest comfort to me to receive your sympathizing letters.

Olive, too, is consoled by hearing, at last, some tidings of

Colonel Bruce. That he will remain true to her, she never doubts, but the assurance of his unaltered love, communicated by you, will help to support her through the trials and sorrows surrounding her path just now.

Sir Harry continues much the same. He has not recovered his speech, and is perfectly helpless, needing to be fed and attended to like a child.

Mr. Viner is seldom absent from his bedside in the day-time, and always visits him two or three times during the night as well. We have a steady, respectable nurse from the village to help Barnes, and Mrs. Fenn comes daily to sit with Olive, and cheer her up.

The only creature who seems to mourn over the absence of Sir Harry with any real semblance of affection, is his favourite dog, "Spot." The poor animal wanders about all day, looking for his master, for he is not allowed to go into the sick-room. He gazes wistfully up in our faces, asking permission to seek Sir Harry, and sits by his chair at dinner-time, as he has done for years—for he is an old dog—and keeping his eyes fixed on the door, watches and listens for the baronet's footsteps. Poor Spot! I fear you have taken your last walk with your master! But Olive and I have compassion on him, and take him with us when we go for an evening stroll, at which the creature seems delighted.

The village is very pretty, and most of the cottages are in good order, and look very picturesque. The inmates possess a great love for flowers; they have trained climbing roses, and various scented creepers over their dwellings, and have, also cultivated their gardens until they are a blaze of colour. The bright faces that smile at us as we pass the open door, quite cheer our hearts.

You know that I dearly love the quiet of the country, and all its simple joys. A feeling of peace and refreshment steals into my soul when I contemplate its varied beauties. Earthly cares fade from my mind, my thoughts become calm, and my spirit is soothed by the tender hand of Nature.

Gently thy rest is falling on our souls,
Sweet eventide,
Slowly all troubled feelings pass away,
In calm subside.

Around a stillness reigns, and, labour o'er,
We watch the sky
Light up with glory, as the setting sun
Fades silently.

The patient cattle tread their homeward way
To sleep and food ;
The anxious mother-hen is calling in
Her little brood.

Nature is drawing o'er her face a veil
With gentle hand,
To warn mankind that night and darkness soon
Will shroud the land.

The birds betake them to their downy nests
At her first call ;
The shadows lengthen, and the mist will rise,
The moonbeams fa ;

And myriad stars will deck the vault of heaven
With radiance bright,
And earth repose in peaceful calm beneath
Their silvery light.

The growing darkness wraps us round with rest,
A mantle flings
Of tenderness and pity o'er our hearts,
And comfort brings.

Sweet Eventide ! thine is an hour to be
Alone for prayer ;
The day's perplexity to ask our God
In love to share.

And all its cares, its many griefs and joys,
To Him we tell,
And know " at Eventide it shall be light,"
And all be well.

The vicar and his wife are both very sympathetic ; the former says, that he wishes Olive to send for him at the first appearance of returning consciousness in her father. I think he doubts Mr. Viner's good intentions, as we all do.

Dr. Rugby pays a visit every day, and is very kind and attentive, but we can gather very little information from him as to the prospect of Sir Harry's recovery. He refuses to commit himself to an opinion, for the simple reason, I expect, that he, in reality, can tell no more than ourselves, whether his patient will recover from this attack or not. We can do but little for the

sufferer, and must wait patiently for some signs of returning animation.

My friends are anxious on my account, and have written to me, begging me to return home ; but I cannot leave Olive, as I flatter myself I am of some slight comfort and use to her in many ways. Her situation is a very lonely one. She is entirely without friends, or near relatives. The only connection she possesses is a female cousin, on her father's side, whose whole thoughts and time are devoted to the enjoyment of this world's pleasures, and who perfectly detests the country.

You will, I know, take the earliest opportunity of acquainting Colonel Bruce with the news of the baronet's illness. It is most essential that Olive should be able to communicate with him at once, if Sir Harry should happen to regain his faculties. We cling to the hope that, with the prospect of an invalid, crippled life—or maybe the thought of the stern visitant, Death, in the distance—he may be persuaded to think of the future of his unhappy child, and relenting in his harshness to her, abandon the plan he has formed of her union with Viner. If he would only consent to make Olive happy in her own way, what comfort and satisfaction of mind would hover over his declining days, and cheer his departure from this world !

But on the other hand—I shudder to think of it—should Olive ever be driven, by his over-mastering will, to give her hand to Viner, what resigned desolation would reign in her soul ! She may, perchance, in after years, be led to call the numbness of spirit that clouds her mind, by the false name of peace ; but where is the woman who ever won the victory over her affections in such a manner, but knows, too well, that she has passed through the portals of the grave, where lie buried the joy and light of her life ? She may have escaped shipwreck in the dark, raging waters of despair, yet, nevermore will the beacon of Hope light her stumbling footsteps over the rocks of Sorrow !

Oh, give us your prayers, my dear friend, and believe that I am often with you in spirit.

Olive wishes to be kindly remembered by you, and with much affection, I remain always

Your affectionate friend,
MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER VIII.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court,

August 27th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

Two days after I last wrote to you, Mr. Viner received an urgent summons to hasten to the bedside of his mother, who, the letter stated, had been taken seriously ill with acute inflammation of the lungs.

If there is any human being in this world for whom Conway Viner has a sincere and true affection, it is for his widowed mother. This is the one redeeming point in his character. All the love of his cold and selfish nature seems to be concentrated upon her ; and I have been told, that she perfectly worships her son. I must here repeat, that Viner has no tendency to evil habits, and no doubt one reason, among many, of the hold this extraordinary man has obtained over Sir Harry is, that he sees in his *protégé*, a strength of character greater than his own, and has frequently experienced the subtle influence that a cold, calculating nature can exercise over a choleric one.

The attraction of the weak to the strong is always very great ; and in how much more need of support and encouragement would any man become—if he had ever *once* required such props—when he felt the infirmities of age creeping upon him ; and knew, that failing powers of mind would bring increased weakness and inability to steer his course alone.

A case like this must always excite our pity ; and you will, I am sure, be struck with the similarity of the picture I have just drawn, to the past and present circumstances surrounding the master of Fairleigh Court.

How frequently must the, now unconscious, inmate of that quiet chamber near me, have lain awake in that same room and thought, in the silence of the night, with pangs of remorse and misery, over his ill-spent life ? How often must he have shrunk in horror from the remembrance—if the universal superstition be a true one—of the death-blow he had dealt in his inebriated state to the unfortunate victim of his wrath ?

Oh, think, dear Julia, of the many struggles for freedom this unhappy man must have made, before he bowed his proud spirit in submission to the will of Viner, and laid his neck for ever under the yoke of such tyranny as that exercised over him by the man whom he had sheltered and befriended !

How much better—if Sir Harry were guilty of the deed imputed to him—would it have been in the future, had he but spoken the few words that would have set free his captive soul ! If he had but borne, with dignity and patience, the punishment awarded by a just tribunal of disinterested men, for a crime the consequences of which were unknown to him at the time he committed it !

Instead of this, he accepted the cup of bitter humiliation handed to him by one who owed him a debt of gratitude ; one, who feels no pity for the state of misery in which his kind benefactor has lived all these years ; who would not share his remorse for the results of his ill-starred deed if it became public ; or bestow any sympathy upon him for his unavailing regrets over the occurrence.

Conway Viner bound Sir Harry Gray in chains of iron years ago, in order to make merchandise out of his distress. But when the cobwebs wrought by intemperance were swept from his disordered brain, by years of abstinence—when things appeared clear to his renovated judgment—what pangs of repentance must have racked the baronet's soul, and what must have been his anguish to discover that he had sold himself into a bondage far greater than any he had ever experienced before ! In the days that were gone, he had been his own master, but now he must toil on as the slave of another !

May the dear God, in His mercy, grant this unfortunate man the opportunity to openly confess his sin, and clear away the mystery of the past, before he enters into the presence of his Maker.

This is a long digression, but my thoughts needed an outlet, and it is only to you, my kind friend, that I can express the emotions that weigh upon my mind.

Though nothing short of the summons Viner has received would, I am sure, have dragged him away from the Court at this time, yet, he went with less anxiety, knowing that no one could hold any communication with Sir Harry in his present

condition. But it must have caused him the greatest dismay to be obliged to leave the citadel in such an undefended state.

He lingered about, giving orders and instructions to the last. The carriage and horses that were to convey him to S—— waited at the door, and when he could no longer delay, he bid us a hasty adieu, saying that he should return as quickly as the state of his mother's health would permit.

We felt no desire ever to see his face again. The house seems brighter, the servants more cheerful, for his absence ; and Olive has lost the look of apprehension that always overshadows her lovely face whenever her foe is near.

We know that Mr. Viner cannot accomplish his journey in less than two days ; but should he choose to travel by night as well, and thus shorten the time, he may reach his destination earlier. It is probable that he will take no rest by the way, as his anxiety for his mother is not assumed. We calculate that we may be free from his supervision for at least a week, if not more. He will certainly remain with his mother until she is out of danger ; or, should her illness prove mortal, then he must necessarily be absent some time longer. At all events we are delivered from the incubus of his presence, and rejoice accordingly.

When Dr. Rugby paid his usual visit this morning, he thought Sir Harry showed some slight symptoms of amendment ; and intimated that at any time, we might expect a change in his condition. How fervently we all hope he may recover consciousness during Viner's absence, I need not say. If the old man could but know of the departure of his enemy, some good might result in many ways.

I shall not add to the length of this letter, as I am sure you must be very anxious to receive some tidings from this house of mourning ; therefore believe me, as ever, my dear Julia,

Your affectionate friend,

MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER IX.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court,

Sept. 1st, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

The drama is at last played out, and Sir Harry lies dead !

It has been a week of turmoil and agitation, such as I hope, please God, I may never again have to witness, or participate in. I am quite unhinged. Olive has borne up the best of the two ; but then, the transition from despair to happiness—for I cannot for a moment play the hypocrite, and pretend that she mourns for a father who never showed her any affection, or tried to gain her love—the transition, I say, from despair to happiness, is like the clear shining of the sun after rain—as summer compared to winter—or any glad and soul-reviving simile you may like to picture.

All that day when I last wrote to you, Sir Harry lay very quiet, and we could not feel sure whether he recognized those who were watching by him, or not. But towards evening he showed signs of returning vitality, and lifting his left hand, seemed, as much by the entreaty in his eyes, as by the action of his finger, to intimate his desire to communicate something that was passing in his mind.

Barnes leaned over her master, and tried to understand his wishes ; but failing to do so, she sent Mrs. Clunes, the village nurse, to call Olive and myself to the sick man's room.

When Sir Harry's eyes rested on his daughter, a look of satisfaction passed over his face, and he seemed pleased. Olive ventured to take his hand, and felt his fingers close round hers as she did so. Thus they remained for some time, and we thought the old man slept.

How full of pregnant memories must always be those hours of watching spent by a dying bed !

Every little detail of that sick room—the looks of anxiety imprinted on each worn face—the dread we all felt that Sir Harry might pass away without speaking—will all remain engraven on my memory for ever.

No sound broke the silence that reigned around, save the laboured breathing of the sufferer, the lowing of a cow in the park, who had lost her calf, and the solemn vibration of the church clock as it struck the hours that slowly waned away.

Oh, I cannot conceive a greater anguish for any human being to bear, than that of watching the departure of a beloved one to the unknown infinity of the Hereafter! To note the pathetic appeal in the dim eyes that strive to pierce the enshrouding darkness that lies beyond the grave! What mysteries are hidden in that distant world of which so little has been told us, but of the felicity of which we have been most solemnly assured.

We know that those who enter the portals of that far-off land shall be "satisfied," and that sweet thought should calm the feverish unrest of this vain, fleeting world. There is but one way of safety for a shipwrecked soul, and I prayed that Sir Harry Gray might find it at last; and, struggling through the wild waters of doubt and despair, land in safety on the eternal shores of heaven.

When the morning dawned, calm and beautiful, a flood of sunshine filled the room; it roused the sleeping man, who slowly opened his eyes, and gazed around.

We could see that he was quite conscious, and therefore were not surprised when in a low voice he inquired for Mr. Viner.

On being told of that gentleman's sudden departure, he heaved a deep sigh, as if a weight had been removed from his mind.

Some restoratives were then given to him, and he grew stronger, and seemed to be trying to collect his thoughts.

He then motioned Olive towards him, and asked her to remove a little key from his watch-chain. After she had complied with his request, he pointed to an old-fashioned cabinet which stood opposite his bed, and directed her to unlock one of the drawers in it, which he indicated by a sign, and to bring him a document that she would find lying there.

Olive proceeded to execute his wishes, and I saw the old man's eyes lighten with a gleam of joy, as her fingers drew the packet from its hiding-place. There was no difficulty in discovering what he wanted; it lay open before her sight—a large, thick envelope, sealed in three places with the coat of arms of the Grays.

Olive laid it on her father's bed, and waited for him to speak.

He bade her break the seals, and take out the enclosures, which were two, and proved to be the baronet's will, and a paper addressed in his handwriting, to Mr. Fenn.

Sir Harry then gave orders that the vicar should be summoned at once, and that a groom should ride with all speed into Slocombe, carrying an urgent message to the lawyer, Mr. Goodchild, and also to Dr. Rugby, desiring their presence at the Court as soon as possible.

Mr. Fenn came quickly, and remained alone with the sick man ; but what transpired in their interview, of course remains unknown. Such confidence is sacred.

The lawyer and the doctor made their appearance about two hours afterwards, and were instantly ushered upstairs.

I then tried to persuade Olive to obtain some repose, as I feared the effects of the long night-watching upon her delicate frame ; but she said sleep would be impossible to her ; neither could she keep quiet under the excitement of passing events. I did not feel surprised at her disinclination to retire to her room ; it certainly was a most critical time, and our spirits were wrought up to a state of intense emotion and concern.

We sat, side by side, on the sofa in her boudoir, and partook of a slight repast, straining our ears to catch every sound that came from Sir Harry's room ; but all remained still. The house appeared already, in its gloom and silence, like the abode of death.

Even Barnes did not quit her post to come to us with a cheering word or two, and we waited in this manner, until a bell in the sick room was rung violently. The sound, in our depressed condition, startled and alarmed us, and we started from the sofa in readiness to go upstairs on the instant, should we be required there.

The entrance of Mrs. Clunes dissipated our fears as to any immediate crisis having taken place, but she said Sir Harry requested our presence at once.

On entering the room we saw Mr. Goodchild seated at a table, writing quickly ; papers were strewn before him. Sir Harry was eagerly watching every movement of the lawyer's pen. Intense anxiety and interest were stamped upon his worn and pallid countenance, and his feeble, attenuated frame seemed to quiver with suppressed excitement, as he, from time to time,

stimulated Mr. Goodchild to greater haste, or cast apprehensive glances towards the door. He evidently expected and dreaded to see Mr. Viner make his appearance.

Olive and I stood silently waiting until Mr. Goodchild had finished writing. He then said that I was wanted as a witness to Sir Harry Gray's last will and testament.

Dr. Rugby and Barnes raised the sick man, who, gathering all his strength together for one supreme effort, took the pen offered him, and firmly wrote his signature for the last time.

I and Mr. Fenn then signed our names, and the lawyer—at Sir Harry's desire—took possession of the will.

The baronet sank back exhausted, but we heard him exclaim at intervals, "Thank God! Thank God!"

On being asked by Mr. Goodchild what he wished done with the document that Olive had found in the cabinet, he cried, "Destroy it, destroy it, before that villain returns!" And as he spoke the words, the lawyer tore the old will across and across, and it lay scattered in fragments on the table by his bedside.

And thus perished, in a few seconds, all that Viner had striven for years to obtain!

And now the supreme moment of this exciting scene occurred!

Sir Harry, calling Olive to his side, asked her forgiveness for the wrongs he had done her, and for the neglect with which he had treated a good and dutiful child. Then, laying his hand on her bowed head, as she knelt by his bedside, he gave her his blessing, and bade every one present observe that he sanctioned her marriage with Colonel Bruce.

Tears coursed down Olive's face, but she maintained her composure, and rising from her kneeling posture, she stooped gently over her father, and kissed him.

Alas! that was the first and last kiss of love, Sir Harry Gray ever received from his daughter!

Dr. Rugby then dismissed everybody from the room, and gave orders that his patient should be left perfectly quiet with Barnes.

No one was to be admitted to the sick chamber under any pretext, as he feared the excitement Sir Harry had undergone might prove serious, unless he obtained sleep and rest.

However, all the good doctor's precautions proved unavailing.

A few hours afterwards, the baronet was seized with another paralytic attack, and after lying several hours in a state of unconsciousness, quietly passed away without recognizing Olive again, or anybody about him.

Though we cannot profess to mourn for one, who for so long a period had cut himself off from all ties of nature, and intercourse with the world, yet, believing that death—like love—"covers a multitude of sins," and standing in the presence of that stern foe, we forbore to judge Sir Harry harshly, but gave God thanks that, whatever may have been the sins the dead man had committed, the opportunity for reparation and repentance had been allowed him by his merciful Creator.

We fully believe that Sir Harry has, in this last record of his dying wishes, atoned for the grievous error he intended to commit under Viner's instigation, and Olive is no doubt established in her rightful position as her father's heiress.

I have snatched every moment of leisure, dear friend, in order to write you this lengthy letter, and to send you these particulars of the tragedy just enacted at Fairleigh Court.

Now the post-bag is going, and I can only beg you to accept the assurance of my unaltered love.

Your affectionate friend,

MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER X.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court,

September 4th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

Mr. Viner is still absent, but we are expecting his return now any hour of the day or night, as his mother has been pronounced out of danger.

What will be the feelings of the disappointed schemer, when he finds that his prey has slipped through his fingers?

Sir Harry's executors are the vicar and Mr. Goodchild. They have judged it best to keep Viner in ignorance of the baronet's decease, until his arrival at the Court.

The vicar told Olive yesterday, that her father had made a

confession to him, during their last interview, which he desired might be publicly proclaimed on the day of his funeral.

The will that Olive found in the old cabinet, and that the lawyer destroyed, was drawn up in London, by a friend of Viner's, at the time the tragic incident occurred, which so strangely affected the whole of Sir Harry Gray's after-life.

Mr. Fenn says that the baronet also told him, that under the pressure put upon him by his unscrupulous secretary—who constantly threatened him with exposure, unless he acceded to his demands—he had, in this will, bequeathed Fairleigh Court and his estates, to Conway Viner ; together with all the family plate, pictures, and heirlooms.

To his daughter he had only left the small sum of five thousand pounds. It is true, that had this will come into operation, Olive would still have inherited her mother's fortune of twenty thousand pounds ; but what could compensate for the loss of her beloved home and rightful inheritance ? or what could alleviate the sorrow with which she would have seen them pass away for ever into the hands of a stranger, and become the possession of such a man as Viner ?

Happily, by the justice of God, this calamity has been averted.

How wonderful are the workings of Providence, and how seldom does villainy prosper in the world !

Although the schemes of Viner were successful, apparently, for many years, yet now they have utterly collapsed ! The fruit which he had so long watched growing, and which looked ready to pluck, has fallen from his outstretched hands, before he could gather it, and ripened only to decay !

How true are the words of Holy Writ which say, " With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again ;" and how plainly are they exemplified in the present instance ! Viner's hopes lie withered ! He has planned and toiled to wreck the life of his patron, only to find that the years of his youth have been wasted in idleness and vain scheming, and that he has compassed his own destruction.

I shall always believe that our prayers on Sir Harry's behalf were heard and answered. I think he died repentant and forgiven.

The knowledge that her father withdrew his opposition to her marriage with Colonel Bruce, and spoke to her with affection

and kindness in his last hours, has transported Olive into another existence already.

She wrote to Colonel Bruce at once, and though the letter breathed a new feeling of tenderness for her dead father, yet, in every line of it could be traced the joy that radiated through her being.

To have burst the bonds of captivity, and to revel in the delights of liberty and love, have already transformed my friend; and her beauty strikes me with fresh admiration every time I look at her.

She begged her lover to hasten to her at once, and I have no doubt he will gladly obey her summons.

There are not many to whom such happiness is granted, as that which is now Olive's portion. It is only here and there, we find one who attains the accomplishment of her hopes, or tastes the fulfilment of her desires, and yet I believe that

" He who for love hath undergone
The worst that can befall
Is happier thousandfold than he
Who ne'er hath loved at all."

The dark clouds are rolling away from this beautiful old house, and we may reasonably expect to see a better state of things reigning here than has for so long a time existed. Love smiles, and wealth beckons to happy days, and peaceful hours; and though *uncertainty* waves its wand over all earthly plans and visions, yet Pandora's gift still exercises its charm, and the "fount of Hope that springs eternal in the human breast," bids us banish the demons of despair and gloom that have so long made their abode at Fairleigh Court, and sun ourselves in the bright regions of the Future.

I have not time to write more to-day, my dear Julia, so must bid you a loving farewell.

Your affectionate friend
MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

LETTER XI.

FROM MISS MARGARET GASCOIGNE TO MISS JULIA VERNON.

Fairleigh Court,
Sept. 7th, 18—.

MY DEAREST JULIA,

Mr. Viner came back the day that I wrote to you last. The news of Sir Harry's death had evidently been communicated to him by someone before he reached the Court. His face was deathly pale, and his manner nervous.

I need not say that he received a cold welcome, but no one much regarded his presence, for, with his departed power, our animosity is partially banished. We know he can work no more harm, and can afford to pity him.

He did not affect any grief at the loss of his benefactor, or seek for much information concerning the events of the last few days. The knowledge that the vicar and Mr. Goodchild were with the baronet in his last hours, must have prepared him for the worst, and shown him that his nefarious plans had all signally failed.

Miss Talbot, the cousin I mentioned to you, has also arrived. She is an agreeable woman, and not averse to assuming the control of the servants, and the reins of government generally; indeed, she made the stipulation, that if she came to reside at the Court, she should be placed in a position of authority. She will remain here until Olive's marriage has taken place, which cannot be for some little time, as there are many things to settle first; and much business to be attended to in the future.

The funeral took place yesterday. It was attended by all Sir Harry Gray's tenants, who were invited by the vicar and Mr. Goodchild for a special purpose, which I will relate in due course.

Mr. Fenn read the service in a most impressive manner, and the dead man was laid to rest in the village church, where so many departed scions of the Grays repose.

Their tombs are well worth seeing; many of them are adorned with elaborate figures, carved in stone, of knights and their

dames, lying side by side. There is one curious monument to Sir Eustace Gray and his wife, whose effigies are represented as reposing together on the tomb, and their ten children, five on each side, are kneeling round them ; their faces being covered with their hands, in an attitude of prayer.

Another of these old tombs belongs to a former Sir Harry Gray, who is known to have been engaged in the Holy Wars against the infidels. He lies—as do all the crusaders—with his feet crossed, and his hands clasped over his breast.

I forgot to mention that Mr. Viner, Dr. Rugby and Mr. Goodchild, were the only personal friends of the late baronet who attended his funeral ; indeed they were the only people with whom he had held any intercourse for years.

At the conclusion of the burial service, and while the assembled concourse of tenant-farmers, servants and dependents were gathered round the open grave, Mr. Fenn, with a solemn voice and manner, demanded their attention, while he read aloud to them the dying confession of Sir Harry Gray.

He then produced the paper Olive had found with the will in the old cabinet, that eventful night, and which Sir Harry had deposited there fully a year ago, unknown to Viner ; trusting, as he told Mr. Fenn, that some opportunity might occur for the contents to be made public ; and thus, by getting rid of the burdensome secret that weighed upon his soul, he might obtain peace, and ease his guilty conscience

The vicar then proceeded to fulfil the onerous duty imposed upon him.

He began by stating that it was the express wish of Sir Harry Gray that he should make use of this special occasion to publish his dying statement, and that the sick man, guessing his hours were numbered, wished to make atonement for his sins, before entering the presence of his Maker.

Then the vicar read the few words contained in the paper, which stated that the footman Graves met his death from a blow given by the hand of his master, while he was assisting him upstairs to bed, on the night in question.

The announcement of Sir Harry's culpability was received in silence, but after the crowd had dispersed, remarks were freely exchanged, though no wonder was expressed at the statement, for, as I have before remarked, the baronet's guilt was a foregone

conclusion years ago. The supposition has only been verified by fact.

As Sir Harry had requested that Viner should be spared exposure as much as possible, no comment was made by the vicar on his conduct. People were left to form their own conclusions as to the motives which induced him to swear falsely at the inquest; and also to guess why Sir Harry from that time secluded himself from the world, and fell altogether into the power of his secretary.

Colonel Bruce was unable to be present at the funeral, which we much regretted; but he has been unavoidably detained by the pressure of his regimental duties.

In the afternoon we all assembled, by Mr. Goodchild's desire, in the library, in order to hear Sir Harry's will read.

Everything is left unconditionally to Olive, with the exception of a few legacies to old and valued servants.

Mr. Viner quietly took his departure from the Court late in the evening, seeking no interview with any one.

With the arrival of Colonel Bruce, I too, shall make my exit. Olive will not require me now, and my mother is longing to embrace her child again, after such a long absence.

How little did I expect, when I parted from her, to be concerned in such important and painful events! But "all's well that ends well."

I walked across the meadows this afternoon to the farm to wish good Mrs. Aston farewell, and to drink a parting glass of the rich, new milk with which she has so often regaled me during my stay here.

Portly farmer Aston, who is of the bovine type, and much given to mugs of strong ale, looks upon his wife's milk-pans with contempt, and thinks such nutriment only fit for women and children.

I leave him to the enjoyment of his choice, and take a last look at the dame's fine turkeys, and her rare poultry and pigeons; some of the latter are so tame that, at her call, they alight upon her shoulder, while others sun themselves at our feet, and preen their beautiful plumage before our admiring eyes.

I think there is something delightfully peaceful and calm about a farm-yard. Even the animals have a look of content-

ment and repose ; neither they nor the people about the place are ever in a hurry, and seldom get ruffled, excepting when the clouds gather blackness, and the rain pours down in torrents upon the new-mown hay, or the golden sheaves of corn ; and then, I grant, it is as well to keep away from the farm, and out of reach of the master's tongue.

One of the great charms my country walks have possessed for me, since I came to Fairleigh Court, is the sweet song of the larks. I never saw such a number of these little warblers anywhere else, and it has been my delight to sit upon a comfortable stile, leading into a large field of turnips, belonging to farmer Aston, and watch their gradual ascent to the clear blue sky overhead, and listen to their melodious song, borne through the still, clear air.

While thus indulging my lazy mood a little while ago, and just at the time when black care overshadowed our minds, I wrote the following little poem, intending to send it to you, but my letters grew so bulky that I changed my mind. Now, before I leave this neighbourhood I enclose it, as you can trace my course of thought better if the verses reach you while I am still lingering in this beautiful country :

A lark sang in the summer sky
A sweet and tuneful lay,
And warbled low its tender call :
" Fly from the world away.

" Shake off all care, escape on high,
And cleave the air with me,
And let thy heart expend itself
In joyous melody.

" Descend, uprise, at thine own will,
Unheeded, unconfined,
And taste the joys of height and space,
With liberty combined.

" Cleave through the sky, for there no voice
Can pierce to stay thy flight,
Escape from earth, and soar with me
Away from human sight.

" For here the air blows fresh and clear,
The cloudlets are serene ;
Escape from earth, and mount with me
Where thou hast never been."

" Oh, pretty bird, your call is vain,
Your sweet appeal to me!
I am of earth, and thou near heaven—
I cannot fly with thee.

" Yet here the breezes softly play,
The sky is azure blue,
And all thou tell'st of beauty rare
My bird, I see it too.

" I hear thy soft, melodious voice
Ascending higher, higher ;
My soul is drawn to heaven with thee,
And upward I aspire.

" But I possess no wings for flight,
Fast to the earth am tied,
I could not bear those rays of light,
Or through that ether ride.

" The glorious stretch of summer sky,
The billowy waves of light,
I see them all !—they smiling wait
To hide thee from my sight.

" I gaze and gaze—my eyes grow dim,
I hear thy gleeful song ;
Soon thou wilt soar beyond my ken,
To boundless space belong.

" Take with thee, then, my heart, sweet bird,
And one true, earnest prayer,
For heaven is open to thy voice,
And nearer to thine ear.

" No, not my heart ; the weight of it
Would hinder thy sweet flight,
And I might watch and vainly wait
For thy return to-night.

" But bear one prayer to heaven for me,
One little thought, dear bird ;
Perhaps amid the silence there,
'Twill be the sooner heard."

I have fed the swans for the last time, and tried to console the unhappy peacock. I have visited all my favourite haunts, and watched the little brown squirrels running from bough to bough of the fine old trees. The corn will soon be fit to cut, and promises to be abundant. Nature rejoices with us in our emancipation from the fetters of despondency.

I think Miss Talbot and Olive will probably go abroad for some time ; foreign travel is recommended by Dr. Rugby, for Olive's health. No doubt fresh scenes will dissipate the shadows from her mind sooner than anything else.

The wedding is fixed to take place in the spring, and I am invited to return here for the event. Olive declares, no one but good Mr. Fenn shall perform the ceremony.

And now farewell to Fairleigh Court, and to you too, my dearest friend.

The patience with which you have perused my outpourings merits a reward, which doubtless you will, one day, receive.

Olive joins her love to mine, and begs your acceptance of it.

Ever believe me to be,

Your affectionate friend,

MARGARET GASCOIGNE.

P.S.—Colonel Bruce has just arrived. He is a fine, soldierly-looking man, and I do not wonder that he won Olive's heart. Adieu.

THE END.

Vol. LXXXII.

No. 325.

BELGRAVIA
LONDON MAGAZINE

DECEMBER

1893

F. V. WHITE & CO.,

14, BEDFORD STREET, STRAND LONDON, W.C.

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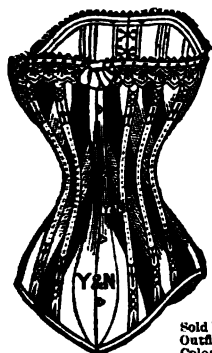
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A NOTABLE percentage—about one-third, I think—of the power of a steam engine is used up in overcoming the friction of its own parts. Hence inventors are constantly testing devices to reduce friction. Yet they can never overcome it; and the resistance created by it represents power (and hence expense also) absolutely lost. Now the human body is a machine propelled by heat, exactly as an engine is; and anything that retards it may be considered as friction. Very good, then. You have noticed great differences in your own vigour. Some days you work easily, and on others with difficulty. This is so whether you are chiefly a muscle-worker or a brain-worker; or a mixture of both—as most people are. Occasionally you are able to do more work in a day than at other times you can do in three. It is the odds between walking on smooth, hard level ground and dragging yourself uphill through wet clay. What wouldn't lawyers, authors, clergymen, and all other brain-workers give for something having the power to keep their minds clear and strong? Or body-workers for something that would prevent aching, weakness, and fatigue? Do I know what will do it? No, I don't. If I did I could retail the secret for more money than is stowed away in the Bank of England. But I do know one thing, and will tell it you in a minute—for nothing. First, however, we will talk of Mr. J. B. Goss and the friction he tried so long to overcome. Mr. Goss is a large farmer living at Stradsett, near Downham Market, Norfolk, and is well known in his district. When the farmers meet on market days he often speaks of his experience and how he came out of it. In order to cover it all he has to go back fifteen years—to about 1878. At that time he began to feel the signs of some disease which he could neither account for nor understand. At first he merely realised that he was out of condition. His work became less and less a pleasure and more and more a task. From his business his thoughts turned upon himself, and no man can work well in that form. Then he and his victuals began to disagree, which is a state of things to make a man ask what can the reason be? He had a well-provided table, of course; yet he often sat down to his meals and couldn't touch a morsel. Mr. Goss knew that this would never do. If a man expects to live, he *must* eat. There are no two ways about that. So he ate more or less—although not much—without the stimulus of an appetite; he forced it down, as you may say. But this wouldn't do either. When the stomach goes on strike it can't be *whipped* into working before the question at issue is properly settled. Thus it ended in his having great pain and tightness at his sides and chest. "I was constantly belching up a sour fluid," he says, "which ran out of my mouth like vinegar. I had a horrible sensation at the stomach for which I was not able to find any relief. For nights together I could get no sleep; and in this general condition *I continued for five years*, no medicine or medical treatment doing more than to abate some of the worst symptoms for the time being. In the early part of 1883 I heard of a medicine which was said to do good in cases like mine. Whether it would help me of course I had no idea. After so many things have failed, one naturally has no faith in a new one. Yet I got a supply and began with it. In a short time it was plain that I had come upon the real remedy at last. My food agreed with me, and soon all pain and distress gradually left me. Since then (now ten years ago) I have kept in the best of health. If I or any of my family ail anything, a dose of Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup—the medicine that cured me—soon sets us right. We have no need of a doctor. (Signed) J. B. Goss, March 24th, 1893."

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# BELGRAVIA.

DECEMBER, 1893.

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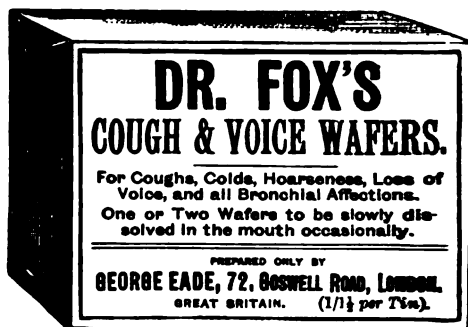
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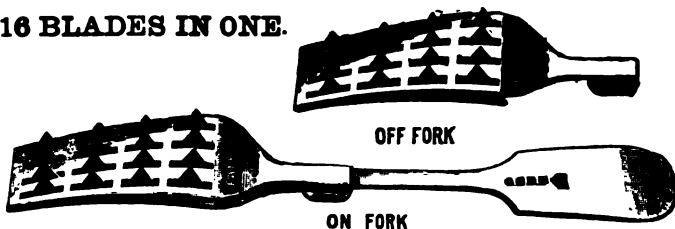
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## THE PRINCE OF WALES AND THE LIFE-BOAT SERVICE.

*Speeches of His Royal Highness at the Annual General Meeting on the 18th March, 1893.*

"As your chairman to-day it is my duty to move the first resolution, which is 'That the report now read be adopted, printed and circulated.' The last occasion on which I had the satisfaction of presiding at the Annual General Meeting of the ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION was exactly nine years ago, in 1884. Since that time the Institution has made more progress and shown a greater activity than in any similar period of its history, as the figures which I am about to quote will prove. 37 new stations have been established, 260 new Life-boats have been placed on the coast, 101 old Life-boats improved, and 6,672 lives have been saved, for which rewards have been granted. The total number of Life-boats on the 31st December last year was 304, and the total number of lives for which the Institution granted rewards between 1824, when it was founded, and the end of 1892, was upwards of 37,000. In 1883 the receipts of the Institution from all sources, excluding legacies, were 40,250*l.*, and in 1892 58,654*l.*, or a net increase of nearly 50 per cent.; and this is the more satisfactory as there was a great depression in trade and agriculture during the whole of that period. In 1883 the expenditure amounted to 45,817*l.*, and in 1892 to 80,416*l.* But I must point out that the increased expenditure was mainly due to the additional number of stations which were established, to the construction of Life-boats, carriages, boat-houses, and slipways, to the increase in the pay of the Life-boat men on rescue and other services, to the competitive trials with Life-boats, a special item, and to the increased price of labour and materials (loud cheers). In February 1889, the Institution promoted a Bill in the House of Commons to amend the Act of 1877 for the removal of wrecks on the coast of the United Kingdom which might prove dangerous to Life-boat crews in the performance of their life-saving duties. This was the first Bill that was passed through Parliament in that year, and the first, likewise, to which in 1889 the Queen, Patron of the Institution, affixed her signature (cheers), and I am glad to inform you that many dangerous wrecks have since been removed under the provisions of this Act (cheers). It is anticipated that, owing to the establishment of coast communication round the United Kingdom now being carried out, and a Royal Commission having sent in its first Report containing certain important recommendations, that a great saving of life will in the future be effected. In February 1889, also, the Committee placed on the coast the first steam Life-boat ever built, at a cost of 5000*l.*, and since the inspection of it at Cowes by the German Emperor and myself in August last, an offer has been made by the firm that constructed it to build another with various improvements for 3250*l.*, and I understand that this offer is about to be considered by the Committee. I think you will agree with me that the Committee came to a wise decision when they determined in Nov. 1891 that, in order to improve the condition of the Life-boat crews, the pay for their services should be increased by one-half during the six winter months (cheers). I am informed that this considerate measure has been much appreciated by the men. The difference between the expenditure and the receipts from the ordinary sources of income which I have mentioned, was met by the appropriation of legacies and capital. But there is no doubt that the financial question is one of vital and pressing importance, and will require the earnest consideration and attention of the Committee as well as every possible help from the public. The fact that the income from subscriptions, donations, and interest on investments was insufficient by 21,888*l.*, to meet the expenditure of last year is a grave matter for reflection, and points at once to the desirability of extending the new system, which has been successfully adopted in Lancashire, of having 'Life-Boat Saturday' and 'Life-Boat Sunday' collections in London and other parts of England, and especially in large towns, which, I regret to state, have, as a rule, hitherto contributed but little to the Institution. While referring to the financial question, let me add that I am requested by the Committee to mention that they are specially desirous that it should be made known to intending donors that money is greatly needed for the maintenance of the existing boats and the service generally (loud cheers)."

His Royal Highness, in response to a hearty vote of thanks which was tendered to him, said: "Ladies and Gentlemen, Before we close, I wish to return my cordial thanks for this resolution. It is, I assure you, a source of very sincere satisfaction to me to be able to preside once more at the Annual Meeting of this great and most important Institution (cheers). Be assured, I always have taken, and always shall take the very liveliest interest in its success. I do not consider that in this world there can be a finer service than this one, in which men are called upon at all hours of the day and night to give their services, frequently at imminent risk to their lives, to save their fellow creatures from the frightful death of drowning. This is, to my mind, one of the noblest and finest services to which a human being can belong (cheers). Such being the case and knowing how much money is expended in order to keep this Institution on a proper footing, I sincerely hope the words which have fallen from so many able speakers to-day will not be forgotten, and that you will all do your utmost by your voluntary contributions to assist to maintain a Society of such importance. Let me thank you once more for your kind reception and assure you of the pleasure it has given me to meet you (loud cheers)."

*Annual Subscriptions and Donations are thankfully received by the Secretary, CHARLES DUBDIS, Esq., at the Institution, 14 JOHN STREET, ADELPHI, London, W.C.; by the Bankers of the Institution, Messrs. COURTS and Co., 59 Strand; by all the other Bankers in the United Kingdom; and by all the Life-boat Branches.*

[P.T.O.]

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| <i>Alona</i> , s.s., of Hull ..... 7                                                         | <i>Holy Island</i> fishing boats—rendered assistance.                                  | <i>Paul</i> , brig. of Hemebant—remained by vessel.                                               |
| Arbroath fishing boats—remained in attendance.                                               | <i>Idnold</i> , s.s., of Sunderland—assisted to save vessel and ..... 15               | <i>Peabeskirk</i> , barque, of Glasgow—rendered assistance.                                       |
| <i>Arne</i> , three-masted schooner, of Suen—assisted to save vessel and ..... 11            | <i>James and Mary</i> , schooner, of Dublin ..... 8                                    | <i>Perle</i> , schooner, of Dunkirk ..... 12                                                      |
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| <i>Beaver</i> , steam yacht, of Berwick—assisted to save vessel and ... 6                    | <i>Jan and Ann</i> , fishing cobble, of Scarborough—assisted to save boat and ..... 4  | <i>Queen of the Isles</i> , brigantine—remained by vessel.                                        |
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| <i>Felix</i> , brig. of Stettin ..... 1                                                      | <i>Minnie</i> , fishing boat, of Port Patrick—remained in attendance.                  |                                                                                                   |
| <i>Five Fly</i> , barge, of London—assisted to save vessel and ..... 4                       | <i>Miss Hunt</i> , schooner, of Carnarvon 4                                            |                                                                                                   |
| <i>Francis</i> , schooner, of Fowey—assisted to save vessel and landed crew from light ship. | <i>Mogador</i> , s.s., of London—rendered assistance.                                  |                                                                                                   |
| <i>Gem</i> , smack, of Dublin ..... 4                                                        | <i>Mona's Isle</i> , steamer, of Douglas—remained by vessel.                           |                                                                                                   |
| <i>Glencarra</i> , ship, of Glasgow—remained by vessel and landed... 23                      | <i>Moutrose</i> fishing boats—remained in attendance.                                  |                                                                                                   |
| <i>Harriet</i> , schooner, of Bristol—remained by vessel.                                    | <i>Morning Star</i> , coble, of North Sunderland—rend. assistance.                     |                                                                                                   |

Total Lives saved by Life-Boats in 1892, in addition to 33 vessels ..... 886

During the same period the Institution granted rewards for saving lives by fishing and other boats ..... 220

Total Number saved in 1892 1056

Total of Lives saved from the establishment of the Institution in 1824 to 31st October, 1892 37,502

During the year 1892 the ROYAL NATIONAL LIFE-BOAT INSTITUTION expended £77,174 in connection with its Life-Boat Establishments on the Coasts of England, Scotland and Ireland, in addition to having contributed to the saving of 1,056 persons from various Shipwrecks on our Coasts. The rewards granted by the Committee in recognition of these and other services connected with the Life-Boat cause comprised 14 Silver Medals, 4 Silver Second, 13rd and Fourth Service Clasps, 19 Binocular Glasses, 1 Aneroid Barometer, 14 framed Certificates of Service, 42 Votes of Thanks inscribed on Vellum and framed, and £8,423, including grants to injured men and to the relatives of men who were lost on service.

The number of lives saved, either by the Life-Boats of the Society, or by special exertions for which it has granted rewards, since its formation, is 37,500; for which services 98 Gold Medals and Clasps, 1,108 Silver Medals and Clasps, 230 Binocular Glasses, 15 Telescopes, 6 Aneroid Barometers, 36 framed Certificates of Service, 1,429 Votes of Thanks inscribed on Vellum and framed, and £138,900 have been given as rewards.

It should be specially noted that the Life-Boat crews, excepting when remunerated by the owners of vessels for property salvage services, are paid by the Institution for their efforts, whether successful or not, in saving life.

The average expense of a Life-Boat Station is £1,050, which includes £700 for the Life-Boat and her equipment, including Life-Belts for the crew, and Transporting Carriage for the Life-Boat, and £350 for the Boat-house (average cost). The approximate annual expense of maintaining a Life-Boat Station is £100.

# Pears' Soap



*By permission of the Proprietors of PUNCH.*

**“Two years ago I used your soap, since when  
I have used no other.”**

**—Punch, April 26th, 1884.**

# POISON IN TOILET SOAPS!

~~~~~  
Attention is directed to this Paragraph
from "The Times" newspaper :—

"DANGEROUS SOAPS.—At a recent sitting of the Academy of Medicine, Dr. Reveil read a paper on the necessity of preventing Chemists and Perfumers from selling poisonous or dangerous Soaps. To show the danger there is in allowing their unchecked sale he said, 'I need but state that arsenic, the acid nitrate of mercury, tartar emetic, and potassa caustica, form part of their ingredients, whilst they are coloured green by the sesquioxide of chromium, or of a rose colour by the bisulphuret of mercury (vermilion); some contain 30 per cent. of insoluble matter, such as lime or plaster, and others contain animal nitrogenous matter, which causes a chronic inflammation of the skin.'"

The injury to the skin and complexion resulting from the use of these Soaps is seldom attributed to the real cause, so that, unfortunately, the mischief proceeds until too often the beauty of the complexion is ruined, and even the general health impaired.

With the fullest confidence the Proprietors of **PEARS' SOAP** recommend their specialty. They do not claim that it is the *only* pure Soap, but one of the *very few* offered to the Public. It would be easy to become self laudatory in this respect, but

the annexed analytical report from

PROFESSOR REDWOOD

is likely to prove much more convincing.

ANALYTICAL REPORT.

FROM

Dr. REDWOOD, Ph.D., F.I.C., F.C.S., &c.

Professor of Chemistry and Pharmacy to the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain.

"Being authorised by Messrs. Pears to purchase at any time, and of any dealers, samples of their Soap (thus ensuring such samples being of exactly the same quality as is supplied to the general public), and to submit same to the strictest chemical analysis, I am enabled to guarantee the invariable purity of this Soap.

"The proportion of alkalies to fats is absolutely chemically correct. In a perfect toilet soap neither preponderates (the immense importance of which the public have not yet been 'educated up' to realising.) An excess of alkali or an excess of fat being very injurious, and even dangerous to a sensitive skin.

"It is also free from any admixture of artificial colouring substances, its well-known dark amber tint being entirely due to the natural colour of the materials used in its manufacture.

"The perfumes introduced are pure, agreeable, and perfectly harmless.

"No water has been added. Water is quite commonly added in the manufacture of soaps to increase their weight (some containing as much as 30 to 40 per cent.), but PEARS' SOAP is entirely free from any such admixture, and thus being *all soap instead of soap and water*, it is remarkably lasting, that is to say, that whilst producing an abundant lather it is not quickly worn away in use, and wears down to the smallest possible piece; there being consequently no waste it is really a remarkably cheap article.

"My analytical and practical experience of PEARS' SOAP now extends over a very lengthened period—nearly fifty years—during which time I have never come across another Toilet Soap which so closely comes up to my ideal of perfection; its purity is such that it may be used with perfect confidence upon the tenderest and most sensitive Skin—even that of a new-born babe."

Redwood, Ph.D., F.I.C., F.C.S.

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